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Marxism Today

ABE MOFFAT — THE ENEMIES OF TRADE UNIONISM

ERIC HOBSBAWM — HISTORY AND "THE DARK SATANIC MILLS"

JOHN WILLIAMSON — CONFLICTS BETWEEN BRITISH AND UNITED STATES IMPERIALISM

BERT CAMPBELL — DEVELOPING COLLECTIVE FARMING IN THE U.S.S.R.

DISCUSSION:

FRANZ LOESER — THE OBJECTIVE CRITERION IN ETHICS

TIMOTHY ENRIGHT — MARXISM THE WAY OUT

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CONTENTS

page

Abe MOFFAT — **The Enemies of Trade Unionism** 129
Examines the call made by *The Economist* for legislation to control the Trade Unions.

Eric HOBSBAWM — **History and "The Dark Satanic Mills"** 132
Discusses the criticism by some historians of Engels' *Condition of the Working Class*

John WILLIAMSON — **Conflicts Between British and United States Imperialism** ... 140
Discusses the conflict of British and United States interests, and their rivalry in investments abroad and in trade

Bert CAMPBELL — **Developing Collective Farming in the U.S.S.R.** 146
Examines the new Soviet collective farm proposals

DISCUSSION ON MARXISM AND MORALS
Franz LOESER — **The Objective Criterion in Ethics** 152
Criticises the article by John Lewis in *Marxism Today* of February 1958

DISCUSSION ON "ANGRY YOUNG MEN"
Timothy ENRIGHT — **Marxism the Way Out** 156
Follows up the article by Arnold Kettle in *Marxism Today* of March 1958

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The Enemies of Trade Unionism

Abe Moffat

SINCE the early days of capitalism and the growth of organisation among the workers the employers and their governments have had two methods of dealing with this threat to unlimited exploitation and unlimited profits. The first and most natural thing for the employers was to try to crush the workers' organisations by legislation and the use of the courts against them—as for example in the days of the Combination Acts and even after their repeal, as in the case of the Tolpuddle martyrs. When they have not succeeded in stamping out trade unionism, they have tried to bridle it by a whole series of Trade Union Acts which, while recognising the trade unions, also aimed to hamper their operations. And when even this has failed to prevent the growth and activity of the trade unions. the employing class has resorted to its second principal method—to tame the trade unions and turn them into legal and "respectable" bodies whose leaders hobnob with royalty and the big employers and are won for the economic theories and outlook of capitalism.

So today there is much talk of the "status" and "responsibilities" of the trade unions; but the big stick is always in reserve, as was shown by the Trade Union Act of 1927 and the long fight before it was repealed. As long as capitalism is getting on all right, the kid glove method is preferred; but when things are changing there are always those who, however timidly, advise as heavy doses of the big stick as they think are politically possible.

The latest example is provided by *The Economist,* which with a flourish of trumpets announced in January: "Estate of the Realm or Vested Interest? Early in February *The Economist* will start a series of articles on the status and problems of British trade unions." Three articles duly appeared, in the issues of February 8, 15 and 22, with the titles: "The Trade Unions: How Powerful Are They?"; "The Trade Unions: Where the Danger Lies"; and finally "A Code for Trade Unions."

It is not at all clear why "Estate of the Realm" or "Vested Interest" are regarded as alternatives; as a matter of fact. "Estates of the Realm" used to be the title for the three Estates of Vested Interests—the nobility, the clergy, and the commoners. But what the nameless author evidently has in mind by "Estate of the Realm" is something like "Her Majesty's Opposition"—something eminently respectable and constitutional, as distinct from a body that puts the "vested interests" of its members first.

However, in these days no writer, even in *The Economist*, dare make an open attack on the trade unions. Therefore the first question put is: "How powerful are they?" The answer given is, briefly, that they *seem* powerful, with their great membership and influence including "informal discussions between the Trades Union Congress and cabinets", but—they are not so powerful after all. For:

> "the main factor that has increased the bargaining power of the unions is, quite obviously, the establishment of full employment and the disappearance of any significant reserve of unemployed labour in the post-war period of rapid economic expansion."

Thinking of a "showdown"

It is to exaggerate the real strength of the trade unions, we are told, to think that they were "the prime movers of inflation"; which is at least an admission that inflation was not primarily due to wage increases. In fact, the article says, there are "some elements of deep weakness" in the position of the trade unions; the main increase in numbers in recent years has been "of white-collar people and of women", and moreover, trade union finances are weak, because they have not raised their dues enough. So the conclusion is reached that the financial weakness of the unions is now:

> "a source of strength for the employer, the government, the international standing of sterling, and for the British consumer in this winter's wage bargaining."

And in case the meaning of this is not sufficiently clear, we are told: the power of trade unionism "in a showdown" has been eroded;

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"its real strength in a tussle, when employment may be becoming less full, may turn out to be surprisingly weak."

Having thus whistled to keep up the courage of the government and the employers, the writer complains of "the privilege of trade unions to restrain trade (and production) unpenalised" and calls for legislation "not to check trade unionism itself, but to put a stop to abuses by it, unrestrained by the law, of personal liberty and personal choice." No trade unionist will be deceived by this approach on production when the biggest criminal in this country is the Tory Government and the employing class who are cutting back production and deliberately creating unemployment as a means of attacking conditions and in an attempt to weaken the trade unions.

Proposals for this legislation are made in the two following articles, which will be examined later. For the present, let us look at what the writer of the first article is driving at.

The series of articles was announced as dealing with "the status and problems of British trade unions". All we are told about their status is that they are influential and even discuss things with cabinets. In fact, trade union status has been won as a result of two completely different things. On the one hand there is the organised strength of the trade unions, which has compelled recognition from the employing class in the pits and factories and in the institutions of capitalist power, including the cabinet. On the other hand, the employing class has been acute enough to try and blunt the edge of trade union pressure by inviting trade union representatives to "share responsibility" for running capitalism efficiently. Hence the two-sided nature of the "status" won by trade unionism—it may mean in practice either the winning of better positions for carrying on the class struggle, or pure and simple class collaboration.

That is the real problem before British trade unionism today, especially with the approach of slump conditions. Are the trade unions to fight for the "vested interests" of their members, or for the very real "vested interests" of the employing class?

The fear in the heart of the writer in *The Economist* is that the unions will fight for their members, instead of taking pride in their "status" and showing "responsibility"—to the employers.

The same note is echoed in the Cohen Report.

The "Three Wise Men" note that the wage advances since the war have been "secured by workpeople organised in powerful trade unions", and that the fact that such unions exist "may have great importance for the near future." It may have importance because "the habit of demanding large and frequent increases in monetary rewards grows by what it feeds on, and may be found to persist after any technical justification for it in the state of the labour market has passed away."

Therefore they hope that the decline in demand "must certainly be expected to stiffen the resistance of employers to claims for increased wage rates"; and as for the Unions—"it will tend to convince the members of the Trade Unions concerned that a successful attempt to continue the spectacular rise of wage rates in recent years" (which has only kept them more or less abreast of the rise in the cost of living) "would not only involve real hardship for large sections of their fellow citizens but would also ultimately endanger their own future employment and standard of living."

Employers' propaganda

In other words, everything depends (for the employers) on being able to persuade the trade unions that they must accept the employers' economic theories and abandon any desire for higher wages in spite of the rise in the cost of living.

The fact is that British capitalism is having less and less room for manœuvre. In spite of the long period of prosperity since the war, its position has steadily weakened, both through the rising power of the colonial liberation movement and through the power of its rivals—United States and now West German monopoly capitalism. In order to maintain itself, British monopoly capitalism is compelled to force down the conditions of the working class. The Tory Government is the instrument for this—with its measures to create unemployment in the hope of weakening the trade unions, its high prices and increased rents to press down the real wages of the workers. Success in carrying out this policy depended on being able to win the support of the trade union leaders. The Cohen Committee was to do the trick.

But unfortunately for the Tory Government, the measures it had already been operating against the workers had resulted in such pressure from the trade union membership that the General Council of the Trades Union Congress did not bow down before the "Three Wise Men". Even when, after long discussions, a delegation was sent to the Cohen Committee, important trade union leaders did not attend. And when the report came out, it was condemned throughout the trade union movement. The Government's trick had failed. And *The Economist* knows it. So it says the trade

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unions after all aren't as strong as they seem; the employers and the Government can face a "showdown" with confidence.

It is true, of course, that union contributions have not been raised in proportion to the general rise in prices, and that some trade unions are not in a strong financial position. But it would be highly unwise for the Government and the employers to take any comfort from that. The whole situation is bringing out more and more clearly the class feeling of the organised workers, their recognition of the employers' attack, and their determination to fight. Any attempt at a "showdown", whether with one union or with the lot, will teach the Government and the employers a badly-needed lesson. It should be clearly understood that the purpose behind all this propaganda is to condone the policy of the Tory Government, including support to the policy of wage freeze and unemployment, and to solve the crisis at the expense of the working class, whilst profits are to remain sacred and must be protected even in the time of economic crisis.

Trade Union "Problems"

However, to come back to the "problems of the trade unions" as seen by *The Economist*. The second article is called "Where the danger lies." And here it turns out that "the problems of British trade unions" are alleged injustices to individual members carried out by dictatorial "virtually self-perpetuating bodies" which are said to be found "in some workplaces, especially in some large factories and other assembly points". *The Economist*, moved by pity for individual trade unionists whose "liberty" is threatened by trade union discipline, waxes indignant against these terrible "dictators" who enforce union rules.

It appears that there are some trade union officers who undertake their trade union work as as a result of "a sincere social service itch". But *The Economist* hints darkly that that type is more or less dying out. Their place is being taken by spare-time union officials who "not only make a good thing for themselves in terms of power over their fellows," but also "have occasionally begun to make a good thing in terms of creature comforts, if not of hard cash."

This is described as "the descent from a partly politically inspired movement into a plain and powerful racket", which a Royal Commission into trade unionism should deal with.

Anyway, that doesn't seem to matter so much to *The Economist*, perhaps because enquiries into rackets might lead too far in this capitalist country. What really shocks the paper is that these groups (virtually self-perpetuating bodies as it calls them) "develop the most undesirable proclivities".

> "It is almost always when overmighty local groups of this sort have sprung up . . . that the worst trade union offences against individual liberty occur."

And what are the worst trade union offences? "The principle of the closed shop" seems to be the worst of all, and secondly, "It is also usually after these local groups have become most powerful that communism moves into a position of predominant influence."

Of course, it is an absolute travesty of the facts to suggest that "communism moves into a position of predominant influence" where "rackets" are conducted. It is quite clear that the writer in *The Economist* does not understand elementary trade union principles. Communists and non-communists are only elected to positions of influence in the trade unions on the basis of service and winning the confidence of their fellow trade unionists in fighting for better wages and conditions, which is the real function of the trade union movement.

Even on the question of trade union benefits and cultural activities the writer exposes his complete ignorance as to what is actually taking place in Trade Union Branches, including his remarks about mining villages. For example, in the Scottish Miners' Union there is a development of cultural activities unprecedented in the history of the miners, and never at any time were such benefits paid from trade union funds, including substantial gratuities for old members which were only a dream in the past.

But why was it necessary for the writer to bring in communism at all in an article of this kind?

Because just as the real fear of the employers is militant trade unionism, so they see communists as builders up and defenders of militant trade unionism, concerned to strengthen their trade union as a fighting organisation that can defend the interests of its members, and not taken in by capitalist economic theories or propaganda for class collaboration.

The writer has evidently studied the material issued by the League of Individualists. So the third article in the series sets about considering what to do about all these horrors in the trade union world.

An editorial introducing the third article is headed: "Legislation for Freedom". What is it to be? A Royal Commission? It wouldn't produce anything. A statutory ban on the closed shop? Very desirable, but "it would cause the bitterest sort of fight", and therefore "it would be better to try other things first".

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And finally what is proposed is:

1. Checks to ensure that the election of union officials (at every level) is above suspicion;
2. Checks on procedure when union head offices expel members;
3. Opening the door to greater competition between unions, so that workers can join any union they like.

The election of union officials at every level is in fact governed by the rules of the organisation, which have been adopted democratically by the membership. So is the procedure in connection with the expulsion of members. The essence of the proposals made by *The Economist* is that the trade unions should be put under the control of some Government official—the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies is suggested. It is, however, quite certain that the trade unions will have nothing whatever to do with such proposals, which would substitute State control for control by the membership.

The Economist's proposals represent simply one more pious wish on the part of the capitalist class that trade unions should not be independent class bodies, acting in the interest of their members and controlled by their members. They want workers to have "freedom" from union discipline, even from having to join a union; they want, in a word, to weaken trade unionism.

But the trade union movement has not the slightest intention of allowing anything of the kind. On the contrary, it will strengthen itself against all the so-called "individualists", and it will look after its own affairs, without help from the employers and their scribes.

It is significant that the writer in *The Economist*, along with other supporters of the Tory Government, came out with this attack on the trade union movement. They fear and dread the power of this powerful working class organisation which was built to fight the boss and to defend living standards. They know full well that if the power and strength of this movement is used in the right direction their policy of wage freeze and unemployment can be defeated. The first battle is beginning to develop around the Busmen's claim for increased wages and the whole trade union movement should rally behind the Busmen or any other section of the trade union movement which is engaged in the struggle to defend and improve living standards. Never was it more necessary for the Trade Union movement to stand united, and if the forces are mobilised in this situation the Tory Government can be compelled to change its policy, and failing that it can be driven out of office as demonstrated in the by-elections taking place in the country.

The enemies of Trade Unionism are using the Press and the political machine to influence the industrial field, and in this situation the trade union movement should not hesitate to use its industrial strength to influence the political situation so as to secure higher wages, full employment and a general higher standard of living for the millions of Trade Unionists who are the real producers of wealth in this country.

History and 'The Dark Satanic Mills'

Eric Hobsbawm

FOR most of the past hundred and fifty years the debate on what social conditions were like under early industrial capitalism has been pretty one-sided. The majority of the British people in the first half of the 19th century was convinced that the coming of industrial capitalism had brought them appalling hardships, that they had entered a bleak and iron age. So was the majority of the skilled and educated observers. The economists assumed that the condition of the labouring poor must be rather miserable: much of their theory was designed to show why this was inevitable. (After all, consider the notorious population theory of Robert Malthus, to the effect that population must grow faster than the means of subsistence, so that the poor must in practice be on the verge of subsistence or famine. Nobody applies this theory to Britain in 1958, for the simple reason that the British working class is obviously not on the verge of famine. On the other hand such theories *are* applied, even today, to countries like India, where the bulk of the population is desperately poor. Theories explaining, rightly or wrongly, why semi-starvation is inevitable only look plausible, even to those who construct them, when there

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is semi-starvation to be explained away). Statisticians and social investigators had no difficulty in showing that Britain's productive power and trade were increasing by leaps and bounds; but though some of the more wildly enthusiastic of them tried to prove that the condition of the people had also improved, they found this very much harder, at any rate up to the middle 1840's. Indeed, majority opinion was against them. A whole boatload of blue-books, pamphlets, journals and other literature was published on social problems. Few who have read much of this writing come away with any impression but one of considerable gloom. So little argument was there about the general awfulness of the situation among the labouring masses at this period, that subsequent historians of all shades of political opinion were in general agreement on it. Conservatives, Liberals and Fabians rejected Marx and Engels in other respects, but Engels' account of Britain in 1844 and Marx's descriptions of 19th century social conditions were substantially accepted as standard. Most people accepted Marx's and Engels' evidence, even if they disagreed with their analysis and conclusions. Up to the end of the first world war there was really no argument on the subject, except about minor details. There is no need to bore the reader with the list of non-Marxist experts who would have been staggered at the thought that any serious scholar could do more than discover a few silver linings to a very large and very black cloud.

The use of statistics

The historians who want to take a different view—and in the past thirty or forty years they have been very influential—have a very difficult job on their hands. This article proposes to discuss some of the ways in which they have attempted to tackle it. It happens that a particularly flagrant example of such whitewashing of early industrial Britain has just been published: the new edition of Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England* by two Manchester University researchers, W. H. Chaloner and W. O. Henderson.* However, they are not alone in their methods, though fortunately historians of their opinions are now losing influence. Furthermore, readers who are not historians may also find it useful to study some of the ways in which people try to argue that black is white, or at least that it isn't black, or possibly that if it is, it is nobody's fault.

The cheerful school of historians about early industrial Britain has to explain away a mass of very inconvenient facts: the majority opinion of contemporary observers and students, the huge weight of documentation about the awful social and economic conditions of the working population in the first half of the 19th century, and, of course, the massive discontent of the labouring poor, which broke out, time and again, in vast movements of radicalism, revolutionary trade unionism, Chartism, in riots and attempted armed risings.

The simplest way to do so is to argue that all the contemporaries were mistaken, because statistics show that things were better than before, and improving all the time, or almost all the time. "I was reading a work the other day", said a character in Disraeli's gloomy novel *Sybil* (1845), "that statistics proved that the general condition of the people was much better at this moment than it had been at any known period of history": the statistical argument has long been the sheet-anchor of the optimists in this field of studies. However, it was not until some thirty-five years ago that an American scholar, Professor Silberling, thought he had found a firm statistical basis for the view that the standard of living was rising at this period, and for a generation the cheerful school pinned their faith primarily to him. He constructed an index of money wages and of the cost of living for the first half of the 19th century, and, combining both, arrived at the conclusion that the real wages of the working-class had risen. Obviously, if he was right, all the other evidence was at least partly irrelevant. If it said that things were black, or even getting blacker, it *must* be unrepresentative or mistaken. All that remained was to explain why so widespread an illusion got about. Unfortunately for the last ten years the Silberling index has been quite exploded. In the first place it has been shown that we simply do not know enough to construct such series realistically. We know the money-wage rates of a good many (generally skilled) workers on time rates, and a lot of piece rates, which are of course not very helpful by themselves. We know next to nothing of what people actually earned. How much overtime or short time did they work? How often were they unemployed and for how long? Who knows? As for the cost of living index, it is equally shaky, being largely based on guesswork. Anyway, we know from modern experience how full of pitfalls cost-of-living indices can be even in our own time, when considerable efforts are made to collect statistics specifically for their compilation. What is more, we can actually catch the statisticians out. For instance, they argued that the cost of living fell

*It is not my object here to provide a detailed, or exhaustive critique of this work, for this would be too specialised to interest the general reader.

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very steeply after the Napoleonic wars, so that people were better off. But by chance the actual retail prices paid in shops in some Lancashire towns in 1830 were discovered, and these show that Lancashire shoppers paid about as much in 1830 as they had in 1790. Again, the statistical series argues that London artisans improved their position most rapidly between 1810 and 1820. That may be so, but we happen to know from other sources, that the consumption of meat per head of the population in London went down quite notably in this period, i.e. that Londoners in general were able to afford less meat. A third example is even more revealing. The late Sir John Clapham, the founder of the "cheerful" school, rebuked R. W. Postgate in very schoolmasterly terms, because he had argued, on the basis of other evidence, that the builders in the 1830s were suffering very badly. Did not statistics show that their money-wages were rising, and that they were (as is quite true) rather well paid? So they do. But it so happens that for the building trade we actually have some idea of unemployment also; and the (indirect) statistics for that show that the early 1830s were a period of profound depression for the building trade. Clearly a mass of builders were out of work. (There was, of course, no dole then). Nothing is more natural than that many of them were ragged and starving, and that, as we know, this normally skilled and well-paid trade became extremely discontented and radical.

Attempt to discredit evidence

The attempt to prove statistically that early capitalism made people better off has failed, for the time being. Professor Silberling has been quietly dropped. The cheerful historians are left with the mass of evidence, which remains gloomy. What can they do? They can attempt to discredit it, and the new edition of Engels is a particularly fine example of how they set about this. Now there is a well-known and venerable academic technique for proving that, let us say, a desert is not dry and infertile. The critic points out that it is not actually waterless and lifeless. There are wells in it, and occasional temporary torrents, and sometimes it rains. Camels and bedouin, and various animals, down to fleas and mosquitoes, live in many parts of it, and so do plants, sometimes in profusion. Nor is it all composed of sand. It is therefore wild and unscholarly exaggeration to say a desert is dry and infertile, and though the true scholar will not question the motives of other people ("It is far from easy to prove the motive which has inspired the action taken by any man", as Drs. Chaloner and Henderson say when attacking Engels for throwing doubt on those of the capitalists) it is pretty clear that those who say so are unscholarly or probably actuated by a prejudice against deserts. Admittedly there is a lot of evidence that many people regard deserts in this light, but they should know better. This method is extraordinarily useful: it has been used, for instance, to prove that there have never been such things as revolutions (including the industrial revolution). A realistic historian has once said that it is possible so to define subsistence agriculture as to prove that it never existed anywhere, and the same goes for deserts, revolutions, poverty—increasing or diminishing, capitalism, or whatever we choose. The only trouble is that, if the scholar were actually to find himself in a desert, he would not be helped by the proof that it did not, strictly speaking exist, or if it existed, was not as dry and infertile as was often said. Fortunately for themselves the historians of Britain's early industrial age, having proved by these means e.g. that the "Hungry Forties" are misnamed (as Dr. Chaloner tried to do in a Historical Association pamphlet), will not find themselves in the situation of an English or Irish labourer of that period.

The cheerful historians have systematically tried to discredit the contemporary evidence in this manner. That Drs. Chaloner and Henderson have concentrated on Engels is due to the fact that his book on the condition of the working class was the *only* important contemporary work which tried to deal with the working class as a whole, that it has been consistently in print, and is widely (and rightly) regarded by non-Marxist historians as "a reliable account which they can safely recommend to their students" (p. xix). But it is worth remembering that similar attempts have been made to discredit other contemporary observers and the Parliamentary Reports, for instance, by Professor W. Hutt in the volume *Capitalism and the Historians* (1954, edited by Prof. F. A. Hayek, the author of the *Road to Serfdom*), a book which frankly sets out to defend the good name of capitalism against the historians.

The first and simplest way of doing so is to point out Engels' slips and minor errors, which are very numerous. It is surprising how shady a book can be made to look by systematically listing all errors in transcription and the like: until we look at the nature of these errors. To be shown on page after page that Engels did not quote his blue-books textually, that he wrote "16 years" when the source says "17", that he said a sample of children was drawn from one Sunday

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school whereas it was two, and so on, naturally saps the confidence of the reader. But it proves only that anyone wishing to quote blue-books textually should go to the original sources and not lift the quotes from Engels; *not* that Engels' account is unreliable. In actual fact, the concrete cases where Engels' slips or bias are alleged to have led him to give a wrong or misleading impression of the facts, can be counted on the fingers of two hands, and some of the accusations are wrong. This is not the place to go through them in detail, but it may be worth mentioning the two which a reviewer in the *Sunday Times* has picked out as particularly bad examples of his "cheating". The first is "a sensational account of the illegitimate birth-rate among female operatives in a particular factory (which) turns out to refer not to 1840 but to 1801"; the second "a gloomy account of the sanitary condition of Edinburgh (which rests) upon an article written in 1818."

As to the first case, Engels does not say that it took place in 1840. In the course of analysing the social effects of overwork and nightwork, he instances the case (reported in the Factory Enquiries Commission of 1833) of a factory which in the past introduced nightshifts of twelve hours, which demoralised his workers so much—the illegitimacy rate doubled during the two years the system was in force—that he had to give it up. It so happens, as Drs. C. and H. point out, that this case occurred in 1801; also that the witness who reported it claimed that the nightwork had been introduced only because a mill had been burned down and the owners operated double shifts in another mill to keep the workers employed. (No doubt they didn't think of their own profits at all). But this is neither here nor there. If a man says: "when soldiers are kept on parade too long, some of them faint; I can give you a concrete instance where this happened once", the validity of the statement is not affected by claiming that it happened much longer ago than one might think, or that they were kept on parade for the best of motives. Engels might be attacked if he said "Immorality is going up by leaps and bounds today; as witness this case" which then turned out to refer to forty years ago. But he does not say this.

The second example is even more illuminating, because Engels does not base his justifiably gloomy account of the housing conditions in Edinburgh on an article published in 1818 at all. He bases it on accounts dated respectively 1836, undated (1818), 1842, 1843, which is contemporary enough for 1844. (Why should he *not* use an article of 1818 if it confirms, as Engels claims, the evidence of 1836, 1842 and 1843? Drs. C. and H. don't pretend that the 1818 article gives a misleading impression of later housing conditions). There is indeed, as the editors point it, one mistake in this account. Two sentences, presumably taken from the report of 1842, refer not to Edinburgh but to Tranent, though this report also contains a description of the Edinburgh slums. Drs. C. and H. do not suggest that the bits about Edinburgh which Engels did not quote—presumably by a slip—give a better impression of that city than the sources he did quote. In other words: there is no evidence here that Engels "cheated", and no evidence that his account gives a wrong impression of what his sources say, or of reality.

Engels' sources challenged

The second way of discrediting Engels is to argue that the sources he uses are unrepresentative or selective. This is a well-known method of throwing doubt on the contemporary evidence of bad social conditions. It runs roughly as follows: "These blue-books (or books, or pamphlets, or articles) were not disinterested searches for truth. They were compiled by reformers, passionately anxious to abolish certain abuses (or by revolutionaries, passionately anxious to discredit capitalism). Therefore they picked out the worst cases, because these would cause most public indignation. It does not follow that things were as bad as all that generally." A good instance of this is Drs. C. & H.'s treatment of the famous (or rather infamous) women in the mines. "Engels' account of coal-mining in Britain in the 1840s may give readers the impression that women and children worked underground in all the colliery districts. Actually at this time the employment of women was virtually confined to mines in the West Riding, Lancashire, Cheshire, Scotland and South Wales" and they add "The number of workers involved was quite small. In 1841 some 6,000 women and girls were employed underground and at the pithead in *all kinds* of mines in Great Britain. In the coal *mines* 1,185 females over the age of 20 and 1,165 females under that age were employed underground and at the pithead" (p. xxv). They also add that Engels said the 1842 Act forbidding the employment of women and children underground was virtually a dead letter, since no inspectors had been appointed under it: but he was wrong. One inspector had been appointed.

The nature of this procedure may be illustrated by applying it to some other topic. The argument would then run as follows: "(a) people have said there is a problem of drug-addiction, but really there are only 6,000 addicts of whom no

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more than 2,400 are actually on morphine. (b) It has been suggested that this is a general problem, but really, it occurs only in all major cities except Newcastle and Birmingham. After all, let us not lose our heads and start making wild accusations against drug-peddlers." As for whether the single inspector under the 1842 Acts was likely to have made much difference by 1844, we need only quote a later inspector for only one mining district, to the effect that it would take him 4 to 5 years to inspect all the colleries in his district *once*. It merely remains to add that Engels, so far from suggesting that the number of women in the mines was greater than it was, actually reprinted the detailed table containing the statistics quoted above (p. 274).

In a word, this method of attempting to discredit contemporary evidence is based on two kinds of blindness. It is blindness not to see that good men can be legitimately outraged even by 6,000 miserable wretches (as Blake wrote: "A dog starv'd at his Master's gate, Predicts the ruin of the State"). It is even greater blindness not to see the general abuse behind the exceptional examples which reformers and revolutionaries often (but by no means always) use to arouse public opinion against it. The historian of the 21st century who will throw doubt on the hardships of old age pensioners, because he finds out that a lot of them are not quite as miserable as some of the cases quoted by campaigners for better pensions, will be a fool. The historian who does the same for the sufferings which provoked a ruling class not noted for its soft heart towards the poor to produce a mountain of evidence about their hardships and to recognise the need for reforming them, is no wiser. If, in addition, he uses the same procedures to defend the capitalists which he accuses their critics for using against them, he is trebly blind.

But this is exactly what Drs. C. and H., and other writers of the same school, do. For instance, they blame Engels, who gives a well-known account of the sufferings of seamstresses, for not mentioning that "the wretched condition of these unfortunate girls had received a good deal of newspaper publicity, and their plight had evoked public sympathy", and for failing to quote a case (reported in the *Northern Star*) where a magistrate had taken pity on one of these girls (p. xxiv). "This hardly looks," they say, "as if the middle classes were utterly indifferent to the sufferings of the seamstresses". As a matter of fact, it looks like nothing at all, except a single magistrate who was sorry for a girl. Even if typical, which Drs. C. and H. do not suggest it was, it does not argue that anything effective was done for the girls. It only remains to add (a) that the editors do not challenge Engels' description of that situation at all, and (b) that Engels did *not* fail to mention the public outcry, since he observes that early in 1844 "the press was full of accounts of the distress among the needlewomen" and devotes a long footnote to Thomas Hood's "Song of the Shirt", which, as he notes, appeared in *Punch* (pp. 239-40). I think we need not spend much time on further illustrations of the editors' attempts to apply whitewash.

The charge of bias

The third method of discrediting contemporary evidence is to argue that it is biased against the capitalists, and therefore (presumably) reflects the writer's bias rather than the facts. The present edition of Engels is a good example of this, for the authors argue essentially that "Engels in 1842 was an angry young man with a very large chip on his shoulder" who took it out on his father, a pious Rhineland businessman, by bashing the British bourgeoisie. We need not waste our time pyschoanalysing the young Engels, because the motives which may or may not have urged him to become a Communist are totally irrelevant. The Congo outrages which Roger Casement and E. D. Morel exposed fifty-odd years ago are no less real because at least one of the investigators had very marked psychological peculiarities. (There is, by the way, no evidence whatever that Engels did not feel perfectly genuine, and understandable, fury against the British bourgeoisie simply because of what he saw around him in Manchester). The question can be answered quite simply by quoting the editors. "It is understandable," they say (in between suggestions that it is not), "that Engels should have taken a gloomy view of the English scene when he arrived towards the end of 1842 . . . Little wonder that Engels thought that he had come to a country that was on the whole very overworked, underfed and underpaid" (xxviii-ix). We may add (though the editors shy away from saying so directly) that it is understandable, because he had in fact come to a country which was "on the whole very overworked, underfed and underpaid". If we follow Engels as he walks through the Manchester cotton-mills and slums in this book, we shall have no difficulty in generating horror and fury even at 114 years' distance. Why then bring in Engels' family rows? There is a story told (it is not my own) of the late Emperor Francis Joseph who visited a Bohemian town, where, shockingly enough, the royal salute was not fired. The emperor summoned the mayor for an explanation. "Your majesty," said the mayor,

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trembling, "there are three reasons why we didn't fire the salute. The first is, that we had no gunpowder . . ." "Thank you," said the monarch (showing unusual perspicacity for an emperor) and dismissed him. Drs. Chaloner and Henderson might ponder this.

The fourth method of discrediting contemporary evidence is to argue that it isn't good enough. This is naturally easiest when the abuses in question are such as not to lend themselves to accurate statistics. A useful example is that of the morals of factory owners. "One charge which he repeatedly made was that an English factory was little better than a harem and that manufacturers had immoral relations with their female employees." But "there is little (in the Report of the Factories' Enquiry Commission) to support Engels' statement" (p. xxvi, 168 n.). Now Engels does *not* say that factories were little better than harems. He says (p. 168) that the girls were at the mercy of their masters; that some masters did not seduce their girls while others did, and in extreme cases there was nothing to stop them doing it wholesale. Such cases were known. Nor should we expect too high a standard in the past, considering the kind of people who became masters in the early days of the factory system.* All this sounds reasonable enough, at least to an age brought up on cartoons of bosses chasing their typists round desks, so long as we do not expect to have it proved by accurate, or even approximate, statistics of the number of masters actually seducing factory girls. In the nature of things, however well known the practice, such statistics are not likely to be available or reliable. I really do not know how widespread such seduction was, and neither, of course, do Drs. C. and H. However, I do know that if we asked the 19th century novelists who tell us, time and again, of the sons of bourgeois families who got their first sexual experience with their parents' housemaid, for statistical proof of the relative frequency of such episodes, they would not be able to supply it. I am prepared to believe the novelists without statistics, partly because they are good observers, partly because the thing is far from unlikely. Why should we not believe Engels on similar grounds, until there is strong evidence to the contrary? It remains to add that the editors counter-attack Engels by suggesting that he is the last one to throw stones because "his own mistress (Mary Burns) had been a cotton operative" (p. xxvi). It is evident that some people find it difficult to distinguish between a boss who seduces his staff by threatening the sack, and a man who lives as man and wife with a former factory girl for 18 years until her death, the girl being recognised as his effective wife even among "my philistine acquaintances". (A refusal to be officially married was long common among continental Socialists on grounds of principle). As is well known, Engels had his only major row with Marx, when Marx failed to express sufficient sympathy for Engels' loss at the death of Mary Burns. We need not pursue this accusation against Engels further.

The last and undoubtedly the most effective method of discrediting the gloomy evidence of Engels and other contemporaries would be to produce an equal amount of evidence on the other side. However, the cheerful school have rarely done this, confining most of their energies to negative criticisms and speculation. I have analysed this shortage of positive evidence for the cheerful view in an article in the Economic History Review. This is not the place to go into it in detail.

Attempts to justify conditions

It follows from all this that considerable efforts have been made to shake the gloomy (and traditional) view of the condition of the British labouring people in the first half of the 19th century, but so far with little result. In the case of Engels' book these efforts have been quite heroic. The two editors have clearly worked for years checking every reference of Engels, discovering every slip and error, not to mention some which are not there. Rarely has a book been subjected to such systematic and painstaking hostile cross-examination. It can be said quite categorically that he comes out of it with flying colours; much better, in fact, than one might have expected. (I wish the same could be said of all subsequent attempts by Marxists to write accounts of working class conditions under capitalism).

Having failed to shake the contemporary evidence seriously, the cheerful historians are left with three resources. The first, on which we need not waste any time, is to admit that things were awful, but to claim that this was not the fault of capitalism: the cup was broken, but it "came apart in my hands". For instance, it was the fault of the workers themselves: "in the 1840s much hardship among the workers was due to 'secondary' or 'self-induced' poverty—the result of excessive and feckless expenditure on drink,

*In passing I note one of the frequent slips and errors of the new translation. The translator, whose respect for factory girls is evidently less than Engels', says "inclination to chastity" instead of "occasion" or "inducement") (no doubt confusing the German *Veranlassung* with *Veranlagung*). The old translation, e.g. in *Marx and Engels on Britain*, though as usual more clumsy, is also as usual more accurate.

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gambling and tobacco" (Chaloner and Henderson, *History Today*, 1956, p. 855). The second, which need not detain us either, is that the horrors of this period were not due to cruelty or ill-will: many people, including capitalists, were good and full of the best intentions. No doubt, but as we know, the way to hell is paved with good intentions. The indictment against early 19th century capitalism becomes no less black if we assume that every capitalist was like Dickens' Brothers Cheeryble, and that there were no Gradgrinds at all. It would make the indictment even blacker, for it would show that the horrors of the period were not due to "abuses" by bad men, but to something in the nature of the society.

The third resource is to claim that, bad as things were, they were still an improvement on the previous period.

The almost universal argument of the optimists is, that cottage and outworkers before the industrial revolution were exploited as harshly as the factory proletariat, while their pay and material conditions were worse. But this is an artificial contrast. The early industrial period was not one which *replaced* domestic workers by factory workers, except in a very few trades (outside textiles, and especially cotton, hardly at all until 1850). On the contrary: it multiplied them. That it later starved them to death, like the handloom weavers, or drove them elsewhere, is another matter, in itself relevant to the problem of social conditions under early capitalism; but the point is, that the handloom weavers and others who were starved out were not simply "survivals from the middle ages", but a class multiplied, and largely created *as part of capitalist industrialisation in its early phases* just as the factory workers were. The armies of seamstresses sewing cotton shirts in their garrets for 2/6 or 3/6 a week belong to the history of the rise of the cotton industry just as much as the mule-spinners in the mills, or for that matter the Negro slaves who increased by leaps and bounds in the Southern States of America in response to the insatiable demand of Lancashire for raw cotton. It is as unrealistic to leave the non-factory workers of the early industrial period out of the picture, as it would be to confine the discussion of the social effects of the introduction of the typewriter to the wages and grading of workers in the mass-production engineering factories which make them, and leave out the typists.

Now, whatever the social conditions of cottage and outwork had been before industrialisation, they were almost bound to become worse during it. (That is why the practice of documenting the bad conditions of 18th century domestic workers from the reports of the 1840s—as Drs. C. and H. do (p. xiv)—is so footling. Incidentally, they blame Engels bitterly for not using contemporary evidence). As G. D. H. Cole once said:

> "Twelve insanitary houses on a hillside may be a picturesque village, but twelve hundred are a grave nuisance, and twelve thousand a pest and a horror."

But this is precisely what was happening at this period: villages were turning into town, towns into cities, while improvements in housing and sanitation, if they got beyond the village level at all, did not keep pace with the growth. Hence, by the way, the rise of new epidemic diseases after 1830, such as cholera. The same is true of working conditions. "Grinders' disease" (roughly, *silicosis*) was worse in Sheffield in the early 19th than in the 18th century, because more grinders were crowding into the small workshops in a bigger, filthier, smokier town, where the improvement of working and housing conditions had simply not kept pace with the increase in the demand for cutlery.

Conditions of Work

To this extent the argument about the (correctly observed) poor conditions of domestic workers is an argument *against* the cheerful view of the first half of the 19th century; not, as its proponents think, for it. The fact that, amid all this gloom, factories generally were rather less awful than cottage or garret or cellar workshops, is true, but as pointless as the advice of the soft-hearted magistrate (whom Drs. C. & H. quote against Engels) to the seamstress who was up before him. He told the girl to take a job in a workshop, rather than to work for middlemen sweaters. But (leaving aside the fact that a sewing workshop in the 1840s was, as Engels shows, far from a bed of roses) the essence of the needlewoman's trade at this time was that it was a trade with *few* factories. No doubt if the magistrate had been a prophet, he could have told the girl that in a century's time it would all be very different, and girls like her would earn their living as shop-assistants, factory workers, waitresses or in offices. But would that have cheered her up, or us, as we look at the miserable scene of those times?

This line is also quite venerable, and consists in blackening the 18th century to make the 19th look less black. To some extent this is easy, because so much less is known about the standards of living in the 18th century, that nobody can say for certain that black is the wrong colour. As it happens, the view that 18th century conditions were superior in some respects

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to early 19th century ones is not as outrageous as Drs. C. and H. suggest: what little is known about the movements of the popular standard of living suggests some improvement in the earlier part of the 18th century, and no improvement, or deterioration from the 1790s on. In the present state of knowledge I would not even like to guess at what happened in between. However, the anti-18th century argument is interesting not so much as an example of misplaced confidence, but as a text-book illustration of the lack of historical, or human imagination and realism which afflicts so many of the "cheerful" scholars. This may be shown by the well-known example of the "domestic workers" v. "factory workers".

Factory work and domestic work

However, the argument about the superiority of factory work to domestic work is not only that in fact it was better, but that it *ought to have been* better. And this shows up those who make it extremely vividly. Take this extract from an older history-book:*

> Although the sentimentalists were shocked by the break-up of family life, yet the Commissioner (enquiring into the condition of handloom weavers) considered that "domestic happiness is not promoted but impaired by all members of the family muddling together and jostling each other constantly in the same room".† In the opinion of the Commissioner the man was improved morally by working regular hours, which were said to engender regular habits.

Now, as Engels himself points out, the workers of that period were undoubtedly often ignorant, brutalised, and shortsighted, and no wonder. It would be romanticism to say that they must be right, because—as we know—they didn't like to go into factories unless compelled to—or that their ideas of domestic happiness were ideal ones. At the same time the middle class observers who said things like this, and the historians who echo them, clearly had no clue what industrial capitalism actually did to people's feelings as well as to their bodies. I daresay the Commissioner honestly believed that families would be happier if men, women and children were separated, each working in an early 19th century mill instead of at home. I daresay the Poor Law reformers honestly believed that paupers were morally improved by the separation of wives and husbands in the workhouse; for all I know they may have thought it improved domestic happiness also. So far as the victims of these views were concerned, the results were as bad as—perhaps worse than—if they had been achieved by deliberate cruelty: inhuman, impersonal, callous degradation of the spirit of men and women and destruction of their dignity. Perhaps this was historically inevitable and even necessary. But the victim suffered—suffering is not a privilege of well-informed persons. And any historian who cannot appreciate this, is not worth reading.

Let us sum up. In Thomas Peacock's novel *Crotchet Castle* (published 1831) there is a moment when the discussions of the upper-class characters assembled in Chainmail Hall are interrupted by a crowd at the door: "Captain Swing" has come, and the miserable farm-labourers have risen. The Rev. Dr. Folliott, an intelligent Tory, says here is proof of the "march of mind"—the progress about which the capitalists are always bragging: the peasant war. Mr. McQuedy, the Scots economist, who stands for the pure ideology of capitalism, says this is impossible. How can the peasant war and the "march of mind" be brought together? Mr. Chainmail, the romantic reactionary, says the cause is the same in the dark ages as in the present: "poverty in despair". And Dr. Folliott sums up: "It is the natural result, Mr. McQuedy, of that system of state seamanship, which your science (of bourgeois political economy) upholds. Putting the crew on short allowances, and doubling the rations of the officers, is the sure way to make a mutiny on board a ship in distress, Mr. McQuedy". That is how England looked to intelligent members of the ruling classes in the period which is now ineffectually being whitewashed. The description is correct, though we may quarrel with the analysis. Nothing the cheerful school have done has invalidated it. But in case we are tempted by these quotations from ruling class sources to get mistaken ideas about those who made them, it is just worth quoting the continuation of the dialogue. "We have not time to discuss cause and effect now," said Dr. Folliott. "Let us get rid of the enemy". And the assembled members of the ruling class drop their analyses, take up arms, and rush out of Chainmail Hall to scatter the miserable labourers into the night.

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* L. Knowles, *Industrial and Commercial Revolutions*, p. 86. (1933 edn.)

† The solution of giving them several rooms did not strike the Commissioner, it appears.

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Conflicts between British and United States imperialism

John Williamson

TODAY when the Anglo-American alliance is the cornerstone of British imperialist foreign policy, an effort is made to represent it as leading to the overcoming or at least diminishing of the historic and still existing contradictions. Both of these ideas are fundamentally wrong.

The idea of one united capitalist bloc is not a new one. It has found many expressions—the Kautsky idea of ultra-imperialism, and at a different period the idea of a United States of Europe. Reformists have featured such illusions time and again. Lenin demolished Kautsky's contentions on this subject by pointing out they were illusory because of the law of uneven development of capitalism, and secondly that they were dangerous, in so far as they could result in the workers overestimating the strength of the main enemy.

Dealing again with this subject in 1918 Lenin declared:

> "Two tendencies exist: one which renders the alliance of all imperialist groups unavoidable; a second which divides one group of imperialists against the other; *two trends, neither of which rests on a firm basis.*" [My italics, J. W.]

The Anglo-American alliance has been viewed by the ruling class, and by both Tory and Labour Governments, as necessary to defend the interests of British imperialism. Its development since the end of the war has been affected by the new imperialist relations of the U.S. and Britain, and by the consequences of the reverses that world imperialism has suffered at the hands of the socialist sector of the world and the new grouping of nations represented by Bandung and Cairo.

As a declining world power, British imperialism felt compelled on the one hand to depend on the economic and military strength of the U.S.A., in order to defend the interests of British imperialism, to resist the advance of the anti-imperialist movement and to stem the growing influence of the socialist world. On the other hand, its own economic and political interests and influence dictated the need of maintaining the greatest independence of action within the alliance.

This was actually the policy attempted by the Tories when they came to power. It reached a climax at the time of the Suez adventure, which was the attempt of Anglo-French imperialism to "go it alone". This ended in complete and utter collapse due to the tremendous wave of opposition at home as well as the overwhelming support given to the resistance of the Egyptian Government by the peoples and governments of the socialist bloc as well as the nations associated with Bandung. U.S. imperialism quickly stepped into the situation, cracking the whip and asserting its dominating role in the alliance.

While still growling and expressing Tory hate towards the U.S. Macmillan quickly crawled back at Bermuda; subsequently in Washington, with his so-called "interdependence" policy, he further sacrificed the interests and the national independence of Britain.

Each of these moves of subordination of Britain to U.S. imperialism, within the established framework of U.S. domination of the capitalist world, only accentuates the existing Anglo-American contradictions both inside and outside the Commonwealth. In fact the Anglo-American contradictions continue as the main ones within the capitalist world today.

Conflicting U.S. and British Interests

The continuing and sharpening contradictions find numerous expressions. Each new crisis brings forward a torrent of debate, but at the end the dominant sections of the British ruling class, after extracting some small concessions, adapt themselves to U.S. domination.

The conflicting Anglo-American interests are expressed most sharply in the economic field but the consequences overlap and have a different impact as far as the economic, political and military aspects are concerned.

Total U.S. foreign investments (government and private) in 1956 were nearly £18,000 million. Two-thirds of this is private investment. More than 60 per cent of the £6,000 million govern-

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ment investment is in Western Europe and there is little or none in the British Empire. Of the £12,000 million in foreign private investments over 36 per cent is in Canada, 33 per cent in oil (Middle East and South America), 20 per cent in Western Europe and the remainder in other industries in Latin America as well as in African mineral investment. U.S. private investment in the British Empire is estimated at £5,700 million.

The official estimate of profits from U.S. foreign investments in 1956 was £1,126 million, or roughly 14.7 per cent of all U.S. corporation profits, compared with 7 per cent in 1944 from the same source. In the ten years since 1946 corporate profits from foreign investments increased more than 150 per cent, compared with 50 per cent within the U.S., according to economist Victor Perlo.

There are no reliable official figures of British overseas investments. Bank of England annual reports give only nominal value of investments, and even then cover only a restricted field. They take no account of insurance and shipping companies, British firms registered abroad, or the re-investment of undistributed profits. Within these limitations they give a total of £2,137 million in 1955, compared with the lower figure of £1,960 million in 1948, still below the 1939 figure of £3,545 million. However, a United Nations survey in 1950-52 estimated a total at that time of £3,000 million; and Mr. A. N. Conan, author of *The Sterling Area,* gave a total estimate of £4,500 million in 1950. A recent estimate by John Appleby (*Daily Telegraph,* 29.10.57) is that "our assets abroad are to be valued at something between £8,000 million and £10,000 million".

Whatever the actual total, available returns show that less than half United Kingdom investments are within the British Empire.

The general trend in relations between British and U.S. imperialism and the activities of each reveal that while British trade and investment abroad is increasing, that of the U.S. increases far more rapidly, so that the British proportion of the total is declining, while that of the U.S. is increasing.

A brief examination of different spheres—Commonwealth, Colonies, United Kingdom, Middle East, Trade etc., will indicate the predominance of one or the other, but the general trend is indisputable.

Commonwealth

Within the British Commonwealth proper, aside from Canada, Britain still occupies chief place in investment and trade. In fact, the export of capital from Britain to Commonwealth countries has increased. While the net capital investment by Britain averaged £85 million a year from 1946-50, it increased to £180 million from 1951-53. In addition Britain made long-term loans to the sum of £400 million.

In Australia, in terms of money, U.S. investments grew from £31.8 million in 1936 to £176.4 million in 1955. While before the war U.S. investment amounted to only 7 per cent of the British, now it has risen to 60 per cent.

In South Africa U.S. direct investments increased from £19.6 million in 1936 to £50 million in 1950 plus loans from the International Banks that totalled £39.3 million.

Pakistan has received special attention from the U.S. for obvious political reasons. Again Britain's share of investments and trade are much larger than the U.S., but during 1955 alone no fewer than five different economic agreements were signed with the U.S. The total U.S. military "aid" and loans in 1955 amounted to £29.3 million.

In India, 83 per cent of all foreign investments today are British, but private U.S. investments increased from 180 million rupees in 1948 to 310 million in 1954. In Malaya in 1954, the U.S. took 30 per cent of their rubber exports and Britain 33 per cent. A year later the corresponding figures were 42 per cent and 29 per cent.

Canada is under the thumb of the U.S. as far as investments and trade are concerned. British investments total £892.9 million compared with U.S. which are £4,322.1 million. The consequences of this are graphically described in the speech of the Canadian delegate to the T.U.C., where he said:

> "One of Canada's other great problems is the foreign control of her industry. A recent statement of our Dominions Bureau of Statistics said 'No other nation so highly industrialised as Canada has such a large proportion of industry controlled by non-resident companies'."

The political and military influence of the U.S. is very great in Canada although there is a developing movement within the Canadian bourgeoisie and especially the people against this.

In other parts of the British Commonwealth there is an overlapping of the economic into political and military spheres. Pakistan is one example already referred to. In Australia, because of its close relationship with China and Asia, U.S. political and military influence is decisive compared with Britain. Recently we read of the adjusting of all military material there to correspond with American army equipment. Furthermore, the U.S. demonstratively excludes Britain from the "Anzus" Pact, the political and military alliance of itself, Australia and New Zealand. It does not hesitate to use this as a club over

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Britain, threatening to sever Australia and New Zealand from the Commonwealth.

In the Caribbean, where the U.S. is increasing its attention, the Foreign Office push to the Caribbean Federation has as one of its considerations a political counter-move to the U.S. Undaunted, the U.S. Government now offers to donate $2 million to help build a new capital of the Federation, rather than relinquish its present military base.

These contradictions and the expansion of U.S. influence become an important factor in the internal politics of some of the Commonwealth countries. It was one of the factors contributing to the recent overwhelming defeat of the Liberal Government in Canada.

British Colonies

As far as British colonies are concerned U.S. investments are very small. There are isolated exceptions to this, as in some of the Caribbean colonies already referred to, as well as some large-scale investments in Rhodesia, and other parts of Africa. However, even the increase of U.S. private investments in Africa as a whole from £30.7 million in 1943 to £91.8 million in 1956, is a very small part of the total investment of $6 billion by all foreign sources. It is true that in Africa particularly there is a lot of additional indirect American investment through joint companies, but that does not change the main picture.

The trend for U.S. investment and "aid" in the colonies is greater after independence. There is also a political motivation here, since many of these newly liberated countries have demonstrated their willingness to accept Soviet aid which has none of the political and military strings attached, as with America.

U.S. Investment in United Kingdom

In understanding the many-sided aspects of the Anglo-American contradictions one cannot leave out of consideration American investment in the United Kingdom itself and its consequences. The *Daily Telegraph* in July 1957 gave a figure of £500 million as the amount of direct U.S. investments in the United Kingdom in 1955.

The main source of private U.S. investments in Britain is the surplus value already extracted from British workers. Between 1944 and 1953 two-thirds of the U.S. investments were from profits of earlier invested capital. The average rate of return on U.S. capital in Britain is 16½ per cent compared with 13 per cent for all U.S. overseas investments. The profits of American firms in Britain approximate £53.6 million annually, of which half is returned to the U.S.

An important advantage of this U.S. investment in Britain is the ability to exploit the sterling bloc market from which direct U.S. exports have been excluded. They are able to use the advantages of so-called imperial preference and the accompanying currency advantages, in direct competition with what was formerly overwhelmingly British manufacture.

Middle East

The Anglo-American contradictions find their sharpest expressions outside the Commonwealth. The very centre of this is in the Middle East—which in the first place means oil. The Chase National Bank estimates the actual foreign stake of American oil companies as at least £5.7 billion, with the investment in fixed assets at £2.9 billion. The great bulk of this is in the Middle East.

The relative positions of Britain and the U.S. in this area in investments and political influence were completely reversed in the pre- and post-war periods. Before the Second World War British investments amounted to 60 per cent of the total, compared with 30 per cent for the U.S. In 1955 the relative position was U.S. 64 per cent, Britain 26 per cent and the remaining 10 per cent divided evenly between Dutch and French interests.

In Saudi Arabia the U.S. has completely replaced Britain. In Iran the U.S. controls 40 per cent of International Oil Consortium, while in Kuwait it has 50 per cent of the total oil investment. Standard Oil gets the lion's share (66 per cent) of these foreign oil profits. The contrast in the rate of exploitation is dramatised by the fact that U.S. oil trusts make £1,607 a year profit per worker employed in the U.S., but in Kuwait the same company makes £14,285 or almost nine times as much.

Numerous pacts have been completed in the Middle East, with the consequent jockeying for influence by the U.S. and Britain. All this is the political and military reflection of the deep struggle for power and influence in this former area of major British influence. The events around Suez and the independent role of the U.S. at Britain's expense need no repeating. The events in Oman reflected indirectly the same struggle.

While economically Britain is being undermined by the U.S. in the Middle East, it manoeuvres to maintain its remaining strength—and to bargain with it.

British Trade

A by-product of these contradictions is the havoc that the U.S. economic offensive is playing with Britain.

The contrast in the position of Britain and the U.S.A. is also revealed in the sphere of trading

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relations. The value of U.S. exports to countries of the British Empire went up more than four times from 1938 to 1955, and has increased nearly 40 per cent since 1949. Value of U.S. imports from Empire countries went up seven-and-a-half times in the same period and has increased by 66 per cent since 1949. On the other hand, Britain's proportion of trade with Empire countries is steadily going down, from 46.3 per cent in 1952 to 44 per cent in 1956, while that of the U.S.A. went up 17 per cent.

Even in the colonies the proportion of exports to and imports from Britain has declined, but in this sphere it is not the U.S. but Western Germany and Japan in the first place which have increased their trade.

American "Aid"

The total effect of the various forms of U.S. Government "aid" is one of multiform interference and a gearing of the economies of the countries concerned to that of the U.S. as well as involvement in U.S. "cold war" policies and actions.

This so-called "aid" amounts to the phenomenal sum of £22,100 million since 1945, with the present level of expenditure at the rate of about £1,428 million a year.

During the first ten years, this "aid" programme was roughly divided as follows: Europe 70 per cent; Asia 20 per cent; Africa and Near East 8 per cent; Latin America 2 per cent. In recent years there has been a slight change resulting in a more than doubling of the allocation to Africa and the Near East and a slight increase to Asia.

Immediately after the war the centre of attention of U.S. foreign policy was Western Europe. This gave us the Marshall Plan, the restoration of the cartelists and militarists to power in Western Germany, the Truman Doctrine and N.A.T.O. By the early 1950s the centre of U.S. political attention turned to Asia and Africa. Alongside investments and military bases, we got S.E.A.T.O., A.N.Z.U.S. and now the Eisenhower Doctrine.

The numerous U.S. foreign bases are a form of indirect aid and influence, and £1,071 million is spent annually on maintenance of U.S. troops and such installations. While this provides dollars for these countries, most of it is used to purchase U.S. goods at the expense of Britain and other countries.

Imperialist Rivalry Mirrored in Trade Union Field

A reflection of these imperialist contradictions is seen in the conflicts between the trade union movements of Britain and the U.S. in the international arena and especially within the I.C.F.T.U.

The most open clashes have occurred over the use of I.C.F.T.U. funds for work in the colonial territories. A.F.L. circles expressed discontent over the original election of Tewson as head of the committee to administer the original fund. Even though Tewson is now out, the conflict still continues.

While agreement is reached to raise a so-called I.C.F.T.U. solidarity fund of £2 million, the T.U.C. and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. each continue to operate abroad with independent funds.

The T.U.C. sends funds to its particular friends in the British West Indies, British Guiana and Africa. The A.F.L.-C.I.O. does not hesitate to go directly into British colonies to try and establish its influence over the newly established trade unions. Recently it subscribed $35,000 to the trade union movement in Kenya to build its headquarters, thus trying to establish future financial ties. The A.F.L.-C.I.O. also announced that it will contribute another $50,000 to a "trade union educational campaign in Africa". Recently, a Greek-American arrived in Cyprus with the openly declared aim of fighting the left-wing unions.

All this fits in with the reference in Vice-President Nixon's report of his tour of Africa where he wrote:

> "I pay tribute to the effective support that is being given by the trade unions in the U.S. to the free trade union movement in the countries I visited. . . . It is vitally important that the U.S. Government follow closely trade union developments in the continent of Africa."

The Root of Anglo-American Imperialist Conflict

On the basis of all these facts it is necessary to establish in world-wide relations what is U.S. policy towards British imperialism. Is American policy to destroy British imperialism? No! Rather, it is a consistent line of reducing Britain strictly to the status of junior partner on all fronts within the Anglo-American alliance. It sometimes adopts an open and arrogant attitude of putting Britain "in its place".

This is the root of the Anglo-American antagonism and all its conflicts. Clearly, British imperialism resists this status and seeks to preserve the sterling area and all its traditional spheres of influence—economic, political, colonial and military. Nevertheless, British imperialism has to rely on the stronger U.S. imperialism to lead the world imperialist bloc as a whole against the socialist sector of the world.

This basic conflict was seen clearly in the

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various American proposals in the immediate post-war period for European integration. In fact one of the conditions of Marshall Plan aid was for the European nations to devise ways and means of co-operation. There developed the organisation for European Economic Co-operation, the European Coal and Steel Community and finally the Western European Union. But Britain in its relations with the latter consistently refused and fought against being reduced to the status of the other European powers. It was trying desperately to maintain an independent relationship with the U.S., in which it might be a junior partner, but not just one of many in the "and Co."

This conflict continues in the present European Common Market Project. The latter is also encouraged by U.S. imperialism, to the disadvantage of British imperialism. An "integrated Europe" with a projected large internal market of 162 million people without national barriers is a promising proposition for U.S. capital investment, and would make possible savings in fewer factories with increased production as well as in sales organisation. It would be especially advantageous if U.S. firms could penetrate the colonies of France, Belgium and Holland on conditions not available to Britain.

Finding itself in this "squeeze" by U.S. imperialism (as well as because of the anti-socialist motives behind the European Common Market) Britain has tried to find a compromise by its proposal for all other West European countries led by itself to associate themselves with the E.C.M. in what it calls a Free Trade Area. This is an effort to counter the move of the U.S. without breaking its commitments to the Commonwealth countries or destroying what is left of imperial preference.

Indicative of the pressure for its latest proposal is the warning of Sir David Eccles, President of the Board of Trade, that "Europe seems not fully to understand that if there were no free trade area, but only the European Economic Community, we in the United Kingdom could not stand aside and do nothing" because "the consequence of nuclear power would compel us to form larger trading areas. . . This is not a threat. It is the logic of the age we live in. . . ."

U.S. imperialism is steadily pressing for the destruction of the system of imperial preferences with British dominions and colonies, so that its mass-production industries could flood these territories that today take roughly one-half of Britain's exports.

As the national independence movements in colony after colony belonging to Britain and France have gained strength to struggle and secure their political freedom—India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia etc.—U.S. imperialism has vigorously attempted to move in with economic support. The U.S. has the dual aim of opening up new markets for its export of capital and exercising a degree of political influence as Britain and France are squeezed out.

This process has been speeded up still more since Suez. The reversal of roles in Jordan and the growing U.S. influence in Iraq, Pakistan and Turkey—and its encouragement to Greece as well as to various North African countries traditionally within France's sphere of influence—all show this.

America's Strategic Position

Further, there is the problem of America's strategic position within the capitalist world, as it organises and conducts its cold war against the socialist sector of the world. This requires shifting the strategic position of Britain and the British Empire. Big strides forward were made in this aim during and immediately after the war.

The embracing of Canada, Australia and New Zealand into the direct strategic plans of the U.S. is well known. In the last year the U.S. has moved directly into S.E.A.T.O. and into the Baghdad Pact in every way short of formal affiliation. Japan and Formosa are directly subordinated to the U.S. while Okinawa is still occupied by U.S. troops, as far as the Pacific is concerned. The Middle East is not only an economic problem. It is a military problem. The U.S. is now the main sea-power in the Mediterranean, in the Pacific and the Atlantic. This was a position long held by Britain.

With the development of the new atomic and rocket weapons, U.S. imperialism needs the whole of Europe, including Britain, as its military front line. America sees this as particularly important for the next several years until it develops the inter-continental missile.

The Tory Government not only subordinates Britain's national independence and sovereignty to America but Defence Minister Sandys grovels before Washington and boasts that "as a consequence of the advent of medium-range ballistic rockets" located in Britain and Europe, they now "dominate practically every target of importance in the Soviet Union".

The U.S., while maintaining Britain as a junior partner, is pursuing an independent policy as far as Asia and Africa are concerned, and many times at the expense of Britain. Within Britain there is a constant fear of the growing strength of Western Germany and the possible replacement of the Anglo-American alliance with a U.S.-West German alliance.

The results of all these contradictions and

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conflicts can be summarised as follows: firstly, while British imperialism on occasions takes independent military measures to maintain or improve the position, this is only possible when it does not run counter to U.S. policy. The Suez adventure and subsequent debacle underlined this.

Secondly, it is clear that economically and in trade, Britain still tries to exercise a greater degree of independence (attitude towards trade with China in the summer of 1957) but even here, where the conflict of interests is potentially sharpest, Britain seldom challenges the U.S. openly and boldly.

Thirdly, in its efforts to continue as a first rate power based on nuclear military strength and to hold on to its remaining political positions and its profits, Britain is spending on defence a greater per capita proportion of its income than any other N.A.T.O. nation and undermining its own economy and trade position. This continuing policy increases Britain's dependence on the U.S., while at home it accentuates the attacks on the economic conditions of the workers and the social services of the people, at the same time as armed repressive measures are continued against the fighters for national independence in the colonies.

Perspective for Breaking the Anglo-American Alliance

However much they may dislike the new and commanding position of U.S. imperialism, the great majority of the Tory Party see the continuation of the Anglo-American alliance as indispensable for the endurance of the British Empire. The Liberal Party and even the majority leadership of the Labour Party do not have substantial disagreement with this concept although the latter are more conscious of the dangers of war from the policies followed by the U.S.

While there is a minority force of the ruling class that is hostile to the U.S.-British alliance and would like to break with the U.S., they are, however, paralysed because they do not care to follow the only alternative policy that makes sense, namely, working along with the Soviet Union for peaceful co-existence and all its consequences on the field of trade. This would be a trump card and the very thought of it fills the U.S. with panic.

The dominant Tories, the Liberals and the majority leadership of the Labour Party all see the Anglo-American contradictions as unfortunate rifts endangering a policy which they basically agree with.

In contrast, the Communist Party, and in a less clear form a current in the Labour Party and the Labour movement generally, see the policies of imperialist America as the major danger to world peace and one that is destroying the independence of Britain and bringing disaster to the people.

The conflicts of U.S. and British imperialism are factors which, if properly used, can assist in weakening the reactionary alliance. The very existence of the contradictions enables us to expose each of the partners, while doing everything possible to win the Labour movement to influence the Labour Party to formulate a foreign policy that does not make Britain dependent on the U.S.

However, it would be wrong to think that it is inevitable that Britain in its own capitalist interest must break the alliance with the U.S. because of the intensification of these contradictions. Clearly we are anxious to help bring about the ending of the alliance for all the reasons outlined above. But there is no law of capitalism operative in the present day world that by itself can realise that aim without an organised struggle against the flunkeys of U.S. imperialism.

It is something fundamentally different when dealing with the relations between the capitalist and socialist countries of the world. Lenin has been proved correct over and over, when in March, 1921, he declared:

> "There is a power bigger than the desire, will and decision of any of the hostile Governments or classes. That power is the general world wide inter-relationship of economics which obliges them to enter this path of intercourse with us."

Conclusion

While the majority of the workers are aroused about U.S. missile bases and H-bombers and are against them, these same workers do not understand that many of their daily economic difficulties and problems are directly related to Britain's subordination to U.S. imperialism. Without diverting the responsibility from Britain's capitalist class, the struggle to oust the Tory Government would be strengthened if we related more effectively and demonstratively the Tory betrayal of British national independence with the new attacks on economic conditions and on the social services.

As a by-product we should try to win the workers for the adoption of an independent British trade union policy within the I.C.F.T.U. that would encourage these newly established trade union centres to champion the national independence of their respective countries, while improving the economic conditions of their members. Such a policy, based on solidarity, assistance and co-operation, and with equal rights in the relations between the trade unions in the imperialist and newly liberated nations, means taking issue with the present policy of the T.U.C. General Council

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and the Executive Council of A.F.L.-C.I.O., both of whom are struggling within the I.C.F.T.U. to win these newly established trade union movements for the policy of their own imperialism. The British unions must oppose the policy of domination and interference in the affairs of the unions in Asia and Africa. All these things would be furthered if united action were achieved between I.C.F.T.U. and W.F.T.U.

Our aim, even within the present-day capitalist framework, is for Britain to establish equal and co-operative relations with the socialist and Bandung nations and constitute a world force that will base their foreign policy and economic relations on the idea of peaceful co-existence.

This policy that we present and advance has enormous potential strength. The fight against U.S. domination of and interference in Britain corresponds to the sentiments of the majority of the rank and file of both the Labour and Conservative Parties, as it does also of the ten million members of the trade union movement. It involves the standards of living and full employment of the people today; the ability of our people today and in future generations to live on this island in peace without being a U.S. atomic and rocket base; and to advance along our own road to socialism.

The Labour movement has the historical responsibility of playing a decisive role, against the present reactionary Anglo-American imperialist alliance. To further this objective we favour the closest ties between the workers and people of our two countries, whose interests are the same in the struggle for peace, economic security, democracy and socialism.

The co-operation and close working relations of the socialist world with India and the other Bandung nations are new and decisive factors in the world which can affect the final outcome of the Anglo-American contradictions. This would mean a policy of friendship and peaceful co-existence between Britain and them as the alternative to this alliance with America. Such a new British foreign policy could rally great support within the majority of European nations and isolate the mad dog of American imperialism.

Developing Collective Farming in the U.S.S.R.

Bert Campbell

THE newly-elected Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. meeting in its first session at the end of March, passed a law on the sale of machinery to collective farms that will make a great change in the organisation of Soviet agriculture and have far-reaching effects on the development of socialism and democracy in the Soviet Union. The law was passed after a public debate in the Press, in party organisations, and at factories, collective farms and election meetings all over the country. As the debate took place during and side-by-side with the election campaign, it had the effect of presenting all the deputies with a mandate, which they fulfilled at their first session.

The subject of the debate, the selling of the tractors and other farm machinery at present owned by the state and concentrated in machine and tractor stations (M.T.S.) to the collective farms, was raised publicly by Nikita Khrushchev at a meeting of farmers and agriculturists in Minsk on January 22nd of this year. Farmers, administrators and party leaders, however, had been discussing the problem for some time, Khrushchev disclosed; and in the course of the debate it became clear that not only had the problem been under consideration for some time, but during the last year a number of experiments had been carried out in various parts of the country at giving collective farms control, in one way or another, over the basic farming machines.

Having raised the problem, Khrushchev proposed a sequence for dealing with it: "This is undoubtedly a serious question," he said. "We shall discuss it further and think about how to solve it. Possibly a plenary meeting of the central committee of the C.P.S.U. should be called. If the plenary meeting approves, then we shall possibly act as we did in the case of the reorganisation of industrial management; we shall publish theses for discussion by the entire people and then call a session of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, for, I repeat, the reorganisation of the work of the

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machine and tractor stations is one of the fundamental questions in the further development of our agriculture. If a decision is taken on the reorganisation of the machine and tractor stations, we should bear in mind that this process will be gradual."

The response to the posing of the problem showed that the farmers were ready, even anxious, to discuss it; and the sequence proposed by Khrushchev was operated, more quickly perhaps than many readers of his Minsk speech anticipated.

A plenary session of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. was held on February 25th and 26th, and adopted a resolution calling for further development of the collective farm system and reorganisation of the machine and tractor stations, approving theses submitted by Comrade Khrushchev, and appointing him to speak on the subject at the next session of the Supreme Soviet. The meeting further decided that "pending examination of the question at the session of the Supreme Soviet, it was desirable to have a nation-wide discussion on the proposed measures at general meetings on collective farms, machine and tractor stations and state farms, at factories and construction sites, scientific organisations and educational establishments, in military units and institutions, and in the columns of newspapers and magazines." Khrushchev's theses were published as the basis for the discussion.

Discussion of the proposals

A truly nation-wide discussion was held. On March 20th, N. V. Podgorny, the first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, reported to a plenary meeting of its central committee that 7,650,000 people had already taken part in meetings in the Ukraine on the subject, and that some 450,000 had spoken and made suggestions. In addition the newspapers of the Ukraine had received around 18,000 letters. On March 21st, I. V. Kapitonov, secretary of the Moscow Regional Committee of the Party, reported to the Committee that a million people in the Region attended meetings and 40,000 submitted proposals and comments on the theses. It was the same in all parts of the country; and when Khrushchev presented the Party's proposals to the session of the Supreme Soviet, he was able to report that 576,879 meetings had been held, attended by 49,900,000 people and that more than three million people had spoken at these meetings; while the Press, radio and television had received 126,000 articles and letters of which they had published 102,941. "These figures," he said, "eloquently testify to the fact that in our Soviet society the principles of democracy have not only been proclaimed, but have been consistently practised."

Beginning March 3rd, *Pravda* daily devoted two full pages to publishing articles and letters and reporting the discussion, and invited contributions from all readers. Other newspapers did not carry so much, but all gave it considerable space. The discussion was eminently practical. The proposals for passing machinery to the control of collective farms found an almost unanimous response and much of the discussion turned on how to carry the reorganisation out, and to deal with the problems of payment, prices, agricultural marketing, etc., that would arise. Figures were quoted from experience, showing that it was a justified step that would result in greater efficiency.

In the course of the discussion some theoretical objections were raised; these were answered in various journals, and Comrade Khrushchev and other Party leaders dealt with them in speeches. Most of the objections turned on the nature and development of co-operative property as a form of socialist property; and in dealing with them points of considerable theoretical interest were made on the nature of socialist property, the transition from socialism to communism, the abolition of the distinction between town and country, the possible lines of development of the collective farm system, and the future outlines of communist society. In this way the theses and the debate have made a major contribution to Marxist theory, and deserve the attention of Communists everywhere.

It is impossible in the confines of an article even of this length to outline Comrade Khrushchev's theses, the lines of the discussion, and his summing-up to the Supreme Soviet. The theses alone are several times the length of this article; and though there is much repetition of them in the summing-up speech, there are, however, new points in the latter; while many of the articles and speeches of the discussion made points that deserve attention. Readers are therefore referred to the text of the theses, published in *Soviet News* on February 28th, for a detailed exposition of the proposed changes, and the arguments in their favour.

A problem of growth

As was emphasised time and again in the discussion, the problem of reorganisation has come on to the agenda because of the really tremendous progress made by the collective farms and Soviet agriculture since the meeting of the Central Committee in September, 1953, that posed the first of a whole series of measures for advancing farming. The problem was also put on the agenda by the reorganisation of industrial management car-

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ried through in 1957, of which it is a logical extension to agriculture, and by the whole process of decentralisation and democratisation that has been going on in the state apparatus and workings of Soviet society over the past five years.

The cardinal reason for posing the reorganisation is economic; to resolve the contradiction that had developed between the collective farms and the machine and tractor stations, a contradiction which was becoming sharper as the farms became economically stronger. It is summed up in the idea that there are two masters on the same plot of land: the collective farm board on the one hand, working the land and dependent for their livelihood, like their farm members, on the results of the harvest; and the director of the machine and tractor station and his agronomical assistants, on the other, employed and paid by the state. And while these two co-operate, figures were quoted that showed that the quality of the work suffered because of the divisions of interest, with resulting higher costs of production on the collective farms than on state farms, where no such division of interest exists. Readers of Soviet novels with a rural setting will recognise the kind of problem and frustration that the division of control gave rise to, and to the exacerbations that arose from the divorce of the labour force of agriculture, the collective farm members, from the basic means of production, the machines and implements concentrated in the M.T.S.

Some of these contradictions have been inherent in the system since its inception. They had not, however, become fetters on production until the last couple of years, when the collective farms became economically strong enough to stand securely on their own feet as independent, self-financing economic units, and when the changes in the system of agricultural planning gave the farms greater freedom than they previously had in planning their crops and production. A good part of the theses and the debate turned around a just appreciation of the rôle of the M.T.S. in the development of collective farming, a survey of the progress of collective farming, and the reasons why this proposal to pass the machinery to the farms was being advanced now, when it had been rejected by the Party in 1952. (See Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism*.)

When the machine and tractor stations were founded in 1928-29 the Party was searching for the best way to supply machinery to the young collective farms, so that all the farms would be able to have the benefit of machines. The M.T.S. arose from the initiative of farm workers on a state farm in the Ukraine, who formed a team of tractor drivers to help the collective farmers in their neighbourhood. The initiative grew into a vast network of stations employing over two million workers and agricultural specialists. Much work had been put into strengthening them and improving their operation. They had played an immense rôle in political and agricultural education, in training skilled tractor drivers, and providing leadership for the collective farms. Before the war, too, when there were thousands of collective farms without Party branches, or even Y.C.L. organisation, the M.T.S. had been important centres of support for the Party in the countryside.

The beginning of the change came with the amalgamation process in 1949 that reduced the number of collective farms from over 200,000 to under 78,000, and raised their average size from 1,200-1,300 acres to 4,800 acres, with a resultant strengthening of their managements, economies and Party organisation. The changes of prices and other measures adopted in the past few years to promote farming had raised the average income per farm from 111,000 roubles in 1949 to 1,247,000 roubles in 1957. Figures cited showed that a major part of this increase in income had taken place in 1956 and 1957. And now, with income this size, the farms were in a position, which they had never been in before, to buy tractors and basic machinery from their allocations to their capital funds.

Collective farmers' views

In the course of discussion, meeting after meeting of collective farmers decided that their farm had sufficient funds to buy machinery now and to pay for it in one year; and resolution after resolution was passed empowering farm boards to acquire such machinery. Indeed, the demand from the farms was so pressing, that it was decided not to wait for the decision of the Supreme Soviet, but to make over the machinery immediately where it was wanted, and to leave settlement of the financial terms to a later date when the act had been passed by the deputies. The Minister of Agriculture of the U.S.S.R., V. Matskevich, put it this way in an article in *Pravda* on March 20th: "The foremost collective farms, with a view to more efficient carrying out of the spring sowing, insist that the necessary equipment should be handed over to them now. This initiative, obviously, should not be restrained; the tractors and machines assigned to brigades serving the given collective farms should be handed over to the latter now, and without the farms as yet paying for them."

The decisions taken by farm general meetings also revealed that many farms would be able to

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operate with less machinery than was actually being used by the M.T.S. serving them, i.e. that the machines would be used more efficiently by the farm. Reports by Party secretaries in a number of republics and regions showed how the contradictions between farm and M.T.S. led to inefficiency and even bad farming practices. Comrade Z. T. Serdyuk, first secretary of the Moldavian Communist Party, reported that expenditure of manpower per unit of output was 15 to 20 per cent lower when the tractors were under one management than when they were under two; and he gave graphic figures on the production of silage to illustrate the results of the contradiction. The 1957 plans of the farms had called for the making of two million tons of silage. but those of the M.T.S. for only a little more than 400,000 tons. In the end, 1,500,000 tons were made: the farms failed to reach their targets, but the M.T.S.s could claim that theirs were handsomely surpassed!

Typical of decisions taken by collective farm meetings was that of the Kalinin Farm in the Krasnodar Territory (the Kuban), which resolved: "to instruct the farm board to purchase tractors, combine-harvesters and other agricultural machinery and implements at the expense of the indivisible funds; and with that aim in view to fix the amount of machinery required for carrying out the planned volume of work and to make a full payment to the M.T.S. for the transferred machinery this year," and stated that it "maintains that the collective farm commands sufficient indivisible funds for building at its own expense and effort, and without state subsidies, a school, a hospital, a maternity home, a club, and other cultural and general amenities."

Position of M.T.S. workers

As part of the reorganisation of M.T.S.'s, it is envisaged that the M.T.S. workers will be transferred with their machines to the collective farms where they have been carrying out their work in the past. This will involve a change in their status. Now they are workers, receiving wages, belonging to a trade union, and receiving all the benefits of state social insurance that workers get; on the farm they will be members of the collective farm and will be paid basically the same as other members of the farm, with their income dependent on the harvest and the success of the farm. Unless care is taken, many of them could suffer financially and lose benefits they enjoy at present (and on the basis of which they were recruited to the M.T.S.). This point was stressed by Comrade Khrushchev in his theses and summing-up. It was made in some detail in the discussion by the secretary of the Agricultural Workers' Trade Union, who made a number of suggestions in the interests of his members for the carrying through of the transfer, particularly for the farms to find the means to carry on the social insurance benefits previously enjoyed by M.T.S. personnel. He also suggested that it might be a good idea to form a trade union for certain collective farm members with a worker status or conditions, and this point will be given further consideration in the light of the experience of the change-over.

The theoretical side of the discussion, however, is probably of more interest to us than the practical details occupying the attention of Soviet workers and collective farmers. The point of departure here is the discussion around the textbook of political economy and Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism*. Some doubts about the proposals have also been based on deductions from passages in Engels' *Peasant Question in France and Germany* and Lenin's pamphlet *On Co-operation*. These points have been dealt with in a number of articles by K. Ostrovityanov, M. Mitin, S. Strumilin and other economists and social scientists.

The theoretical problem

The theoretical objections raised argue that since collective farm property is co-operative property and therefore a lower form of socialist property than state-owned public property, the line of development should not be in the direction of strengthening collective farm property (and liquidating state property) but of transforming this co-operative property into state property by transforming the collective farms into state farms. The argument has found a certain justification in two recent developments: (a) the success of the state farm form of organisation of agriculture in the opening up of new lands in Siberia and Kazakhstan; and (b) the fact that a number of small and weak collective farms in different regions have been turned into state farms. It was further argued from this point of view that reorganisation of the machine and tractor stations would lessen state control over the collective farms, and that this would be detrimental to the interests of the country and the building of communism.

These arguments were refuted by Khrushchev and the Central Committee, and in the articles by the social scientists cited above.

Khrushchev put the matter thus in his theses: "In view of the fact that state farms are based on property belonging to the whole people, some comrades expressed the proposition: should not the collective farms be transferred to the state farm form of economy?

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"Such a formulation of the question is essentially wrong, erroneous. It is true that the property belonging to the whole people is the highest form of property. That is how Lenin understood it. But at the same time Lenin never opposed the property of the whole people to co-operative property. On the contrary, he stressed that the one and the other form of property are socialist, that the one and the other serve the interests of the people, our common aim: the building of communist society. The only difference is that one of them, property belonging to the whole people, has a much higher level of socialisation, while the other, collective farm property, has a lower level of socialisation. Consequently it is a matter of gradually raising the level of collective farm property and thus elevating it to the level of property belonging to the whole people. This can be done only through the further utmost consolidation and development of both state and collective farm property . . ."

In the theses and in his report to the Supreme Soviet, Comrade Khrushchev reviewed the development of collective farm property. The mistake being made, he said, was to think of collective farm property as it had been when the farms were first formed and to ignore its development.

"Indeed," the theses ask, "what was collective farm property, for instance, in 1929-30? It was a simple summation of the commonly-owned means of production of the peasant holdings, in other words: horses, ploughs, wooden ploughs, harrows and some farm sheds . . . Between that period and today are years of strenuous effort to develop and strengthen the collective farm system, to raise its economy, and to make the material and spiritual forces of the Soviet village flourish.

"The present property of the collective farms has been created by the collective labour of the collective farms under the leadership, and with the active assistance, of the working class, with the participation of the whole Soviet people. It has grown and gained strength as a result of the development of the social economy. The indivisible funds* of the collective farms today comprise nearly 100,000 million roubles, compared with the 1,500 million roubles of share-holding contributions at the inception of collectivisation."

Khrushchev explained at length (a) how these funds had been built up with the aid of the whole people and were in fact to that extent public property, and (b) how collective farmers realised this, and themselves were coming to look upon their funds as public property and using them for purposes which the state performed, building schools, hospitals, crèches, libraries, and other social institutions that were not directly productive.

Advance towards Communism

The line of development, he argued, was to increase the socialisation of production on the collective farms, encouraging the development of ancillary economic enterprises and bringing collective farm labour more and more to the level of industrial labour; and at the same time to encourage collective farmers to think of their indivisible funds as public property and to use part of them for public, social purposes. This line of development, he suggested, could take the form of co-operation of farms in joint undertakings, such as irrigation projects, joint power stations, joint canneries and processing plants, which would increasingly take on the form of public property.

Academician Strumilin developed this point in an article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (March 26th). Pointing out that though there might still be need to amalgamate the collective farms further, Strumilin said there was, however, "another, quite expedient way of attaining the same objective. Later on there will be nothing to prevent the collective farms from merging at their own initiative within the boundaries of each republic and then within the confines of the whole of the U.S.S.R., similarly to Centrosoyuz with its consumers' co-operatives, into one all-Union system of producers' co-operatives in the countryside. Such a union would also pool all the production resources of the collective farms for the purpose of their consolidation and still more successful advance, not just on separate sections, but already all along the line in our country's agriculture. This will not call for any further amalgamation of the areas of the currently existing individual collective farms. Each could be given for perpetual use, not only the land but also the available indivisible funds. At the same time, funds for other needs could be formed out of current accumulation that are already not of a local but of a republican and all-Union significance. To all practical intents, ownership of all these funds in the collective farm system, taken as a whole for the entire U.S.S.R., would then not differ in these

* The indivisible funds of a collective farm are those parts of its cash and capital which remain the property of the co-operative, and are not returned to members who withdraw from it, and are not paid out to members in return for their work. They include the original property and membership fees paid into the co-operative when it was formed and when members joined, the capital structures built during its existence, the cattle acquired, and the social structures (schools, hospitals, etc.) built by the co-operative. In contrast are the divisible funds; from which the members are paid their share according to work done.

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conditions in any essential way from public ownership."

Professor P. Fedoseyev saw the possible line of development of collective farm property into property belonging to the whole people as follows:

"Firstly, by the expansion of the socialist collective farm means of production in the shape of tractors, combines, and other machines and implements, as well as all kinds of production premises and structures, owing to which the indivisible funds of the collective farms, which are to all intents and purposes, property belonging to the whole people, will still further increase.

"Secondly, by ever fuller socialisation of all branches of agricultural production, as well as the services to the members on the collective farms . . .

"Thirdly, by developing inter-collective farm ties and pools for the construction of power plants, canals, highways, and other projects for the joint use of several collective farms.

"Later on, with the growth of the collective farms' commonly-owned resources, the collective farm property will rise more and more to the level of the whole people's property. The more rapidly the productive forces of socialist agriculture develop, the sooner will the time come when the distinction between the whole people's and collective farm property will to all intents and purposes disappear." (*Pravda,* March 10th.)

This development of collective farm property was seen as part of the process of abolishing the distinction between town and country. Another aspect of this process, brought out by Academician Ostrovityanov, is the development of state property, a point which this writer found of great interest in connection with the theory of the withering away of the state.

Communist property

"It will be remembered," Ostrovityanov wrote in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (March 18th), that state farms and state industrial enterprises are the highest form of socialist property. They play, and will play, a leading rôle in communist construction. Nevertheless, the present state form of socialist property is not what communist property will be like in the future. The state farms and state industrial enterprises too have to go through a certain development phase to 'rise to the level' of communist property.

"At the highest stage of communism, public property will not have the form of state property. Instead of the two forms of property there will develop one form, communist property, as the foundation of communist relations of production in which there will be no class distinctions.

"An idea of how the state form of socialist property will be converted into communist property is suggested by the recent decision of the Party and the Government on reorganising the management of industry, and enhancing the rôle of the trade union and the broad masses of the people in the administration of production. The further perfection of the state form of property and its gradual rise to the future level of communist property will obviously proceed along the line of still greater enhancement of the social methods of guiding production and relaxing purely administrative methods. Regarding this Lenin wrote that '. . . after the working people learn to organise socialist production . . . the administrative apparatus in the proper, narrow sense of the term [Lenin says: the 'purely administrative' apparatus—K.O.] . . . is destined to wither away and an apparatus of the type of the Supreme Economic Council is destined to grow, develop and strengthen, taking over the entire chief activity of organised society.' "

This point about the broadest and most active participation of the people in the administration of the economy was also dealt with by Comrade Khrushchev in his report to the Supreme Soviet, refuting the argument that it was necessary for collective farms to pass over into state farms. "Such a question," he said, "would only arise if one of these forms exhausted its possibilities for further development and expansion of output. But can we say that the collective farms have exhausted their possibilities? The experience of socialist construction shows that inexhaustible reserves for expanding production are inherent in the collective farms, just as in the state farms.

"Leninism teaches us that as we advance to communism we should manage the economy on ever more democratic principles. Both the collective farms and the state farms conform to this socialist principle of operating the economy. In the state farms, by enhancing the rôle of the collective of workers, trade unions, and other public organisations, it is possible to raise still higher the participation of each worker in managing the farm. The collective farm has a board elected by the collective farmers and accountable to them. All the most important questions are decided by the general membership meetings of the collective farm.

"Consequently, the task is to strengthen them and develop both the state farms and the collective farms, to utilise the potentialities of the one and the other form of farming for the earliest creation of a full sufficiency of agricultural produce in our country, for accomplishing the tasks of communist construction."

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The Objective Criterion in Ethics

Franz Loeser

COMRADE LEWIS is to be congratulated on focusing attention on one of the most important theoretical problems in Marxist ethics, namely the formulation of the objective criterion in ethics. An objective criterion I define as that basis, which exists independently of human consciousness, and upon which man forms his ethical value judgments and deduces his morality, i.e. that basis upon which man evaluates his social being (activities, ideas, institutions etc.) as to whether they are good or bad.

Pre-Marxist ethics could not develop a truly objective criterion. On the one hand, we have the theory that the good is derived from some supernatural and absolute power. This is the theory of ethics as expressed by Plato and the religions. On the other hand, we have the theory that the good is relative to human feelings, desires, interests, utility, specific circumstances etc. This is the theory of ethics of subjective idealism. The first ends in mysticism, the second in solipsism. Neither have an objective criterion. Even the so called objective criterion of objective idealism does not exist outside human consciousness. God is a figment of the human imagination.

These two theories characterise basically the whole of pre-Marxist ethics. But very often forms of the relativist theory of ethics (subjective idealism) are incorrectly interpreted as materialist or even Marxist theories. Thus Kautsky in his book *Ethik und materialistische Geschichtsauffassung* just as Howard Selsam in *Socialism and Ethics* maintains, for instance, that the struggle in ethics in ancient Greece was the struggle between the idealist ethics of Plato and the materialist ethics of the Hedonist Epicurus. However, Hedonism is a pure form of subjective idealism. The struggle in ancient Greece, in the field of ethics, was not between a materialist and an idealist theory, as it was in natural philosophy, but between objective and subjective idealism, the reflection of the struggle between the aristocracy and the new middle-class. Greek materialism was too mechanical and metaphysical to allow for materialist ethics. Equally the French materialists, although possessing a higher form of materialism, were not able to produce materialist ethics. True, their ethics contain materialist aspects, but in the end, they always fall back into subjective idealism. Engels summed up this type of materialism when he said of Feuerbach that he was a materialist in the field of natural philosophy, but in his ethics an idealist.

The reason for the inability of ruling classes, prior to the working class, to produce consistent materialist ethics, even in their progressive phase, is easily explainable. Consistent materialist ethics can only be created on the basis of dialectical materialism, the only basis which can explain the development of society and human consciousness and therefore morality, as determined by social laws, existing independently of human consciousness or will. But no previous ruling class dared to discover the laws of social development, which would prove its inevitable death. Therefore they could neither create a consistent materialist ethics, nor discover the one and only objective criterion, on which in the last analysis, man bases his ethical value judgments and morality, namely conformity with the laws of development of society.

However it is no mere accident that Kautsky and Selsam interpret various forms of relativist ethics as materialist, because their own theories contain forms of this subjective idealism. Comrade Lewis chides me for this criticism as being "unkind" to Selsam. Indeed, I have the highest regard for Selsam and his fight, yet this must not prevent me from criticising his obvious pragmatist formulations in his theory of ethics, whether this may be unkind or not, just as I feel bound to express my criticism of Lewis's theory, who adopts similar formulations.

Comrade Lewis begins his article by asking himself what is the "moral ground" of morality, and he declares that the only "moral criterion" for the working class is its political victory. (I am not sure what Lewis means by "moral criterion"

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or "moral ground", but assume he means criterion of morality.) This he finds untenable, because it involves the ends and means controversy, justifying any means to that end. The difficulties which Lewis faces right at the outset do not result from the fact that a genuine problem here really exists, but that he incorrectly formulates the objective criterion. If we ask ourselves, how do we know that the victory of the working class is good, we must answer: because it is the only way for mankind to progress, i.e. because it conforms with the laws of development of society and mankind. We cannot answer (as we should if we accept Lewis's formulation of the objective criterion): the victory of the working class is good, because the victory of the working class is good. We see, therefore, that the statement: "the victory of the working class is good', is a value judgment on the basis of a truly objective criterion. It is a perfectly correct statement and value judgment, but not the objective criterion in ethics itself.

Lewis's Subjective Idealism

Mistaking however a value judgment for the objective criterion, he attempts to surmount the various difficulties arising from it, by attempting to define the basis of right, a question which by the way he never answers. Now the category of right does not, properly speaking, belong to the sphere of ethics, but Lewis overcomes this difficulty by speaking about the morally right. But why this manoeuvre? The answer lies in his definition of good. For Lewis, good is anything that we desire, prefer or want. He says: "The good . . . is just everything that satisfies human needs and desires." "The only criterion for goodness here is that we want them (things, F. L.)." "Good things are by definition those things that we choose, that we prefer." Thus according to Lewis we only have to want it, and everything becomes good. Selsam, however faulty and pragmatic his formulations may be at times, never stoops as low as that! To reduce the good to individual desire, want, preference etc., is anarchy. It denies every objective and scientific criterion of the good, and plays right into the hands of our class enemies. It is just about the crudest form of subjective idealism possible, and that under the cover of Marxism!

Perhaps Lewis senses this, and now his manoeuvre to introduce the category of right will become clear, because he attempts to objectify his theory by introducing a distinction and contradiction between the good and the morally right. While the good is anything we want and desire, the morally right implies obligation to forgo our desires. Thus there exists, according to Lewis, a contradiction between what is good, and what is morally right. Lewis explains the development of that obligation to forgo desire, through experience, basing himself on Freudian psychology. Space does not allow me to discuss this part. But in any case, it seems immaterial, because this tortuously erected contradiction between good and morally right falls down of its own accord when he declares: "Marxism must begin with the basing of all obligation on human needs." As the good is defined in the same terms, and the essence of the whole distinction is obligation, the argument negates itself. Before proceeding, however, one of Lewis's arguments should be noted in this connection. In his attempt to examine the validity of moral principles, he attacks the assertion of the transcendency and immutability of moral principles. No Marxist would disagree. But this attack turns out to be a cover, reminiscent of John Dewey, for smuggling a pragmatist epistemology in by the back-door. He declares: "If we recognise them (the principles, F. L.) it is because we have ourselves formulated them on the basis of human experience. Whatever authority they have is, therefore, based on human experience." Certainly morality, just as all human consciousness, is derived through experience. That does not for one moment mean, that its validity, its criterion of truth, is this experience! Experience does not create truth or reality, as the pragmatists would have it, but experience merely confirms objective reality, which exists independently of experience, and is reflected in the human consciousness. There are some experiences which may help us to see truth and the moral values of things, and others which may prevent us from doing so. The truth, validity and authority of the moral principle that all workers should support the Communist Party as the leading party in the struggle for socialism, does not depend on our experience, nor whether we agree with it or not, but on the fact that this principle reflects objective reality independent of our consciousness or will. Experience merely confirms its truth. But when Lewis makes its validity and thus its criterion of truth dependent on experience, he introduces a subjectivist theory of knowledge, a theory which denies the objective basis of morality and by implication, the objective basis of all knowledge.

The fact is, that no contradiction exists or can exist between good and morally right. When we declare that a thing is good, we make an ethical value judgment of some aspect of our social being, on the basis of an objective criterion. We thus create the basic form of ethical consciousness, the ethical value. Morality comprises the rules of social conduct which arise out of the

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ethical value judgments, out of the concept of good. Morality reflects man's attempts to realise these ethical values, and is therefore a further development of these values, of the concept of good. Morally right is that which conforms to the rules comprising morality. Thus in the sense that morality bases itself on the good and attempts to realise it, it cannot contradict it. The basic distinction which Lewis formulates between the good and the morally right is, that the latter implies obligation to forgo desire. Yet a good deed may imply exactly the same obligation. A contradiction cannot therefore exist between these two concepts. No, the contradiction does not lie there, but in the fact that Lewis's definition of the good contradicts all the facts. It just is not true, that the good is that which we desire, want or prefer. Here lies the contradiction and the crux of Lewis's whole subjectivist theory of ethics. But in an attempt to save himself from this impossible theory, he introduces this contradiction and attempts to prove it by his pragmatic "theory of experience".

Lewis's "Basis of Morality"

The reader will have noticed, that Lewis has so far given us a rich variety of objective criteria, e.g. political victory, anything we want, desire, or prefer, the obligation to forgo desire, and experience. His article actually contains a considerable number more, but space allows me to discuss one more only, i.e. his "basis of morality". Lewis declares: "The basis of all morality is the satisfaction of human needs. . . ." But what does Lewis mean by the basis of morality?

Morality, as a specific form of human consciousness, arises in its most general sense, out of the whole of the social being of man, of which satisfaction of man's needs is most certainly an important part. More specifically, morality as part of the superstructure is determined by its specific basis, which also determines the nature of man's needs.

Yet when we have said this much, we have not got beyond the most general statements of Marxist philosophy. We have not at all touched on the real problem in ethics, which is to decide what is good and bad. An explanation of the general basis of human consciousness and activity gives us a starting point from which we can solve this problem, but it is no solution of the problem itself. To say anything of importance in ethics, we have to formulate that basis or objective criterion, upon which man evaluates his activity, his social being, whether it is good or bad. Such an evaluation includes amongst other things the evaluation, through that objective criterion, of our needs; which needs are good or bad, which needs it is good to satisfy and where a satisfaction of needs would be bad. The fact is, that one of the reasons for the development of morality is precisely because man can never satisfy all his needs. It is the purpose of the rules of social conduct comprising morality, to determine (amongst other things), which needs are to be satisfied, and which not. This, man can only do, by having an objective criterion on which he evaluates the satisfaction of his needs. Logically, this criterion cannot be the satisfaction of the needs themselves. The satisfaction of the needs of the capitalist for profit are not good. Equally in socialist society, as indeed in all societies, we have many conflicting needs. To satisfy those which do not conform to the laws of development of our society, would be bad and immoral. Thus the mere satisfaction of a need, does not make the need nor the satisfaction good. The basic objective criterion of good is, therefore, not the satisfaction of man's needs, but the conformity to the laws of development of society and mankind.

We see, therefore, that the category of the general basis of human consciousness and morality, and the objective criterion, are two distinct problems, which Lewis apparently does not distinguish. Thus if Lewis means by the "basis of morality", the general foundation of human consciousness, his formulation is at best inadequate and inferior to the formulation given by Marx and Engels, and what is more adds nothing to an explanation about ethics. If, however, he talks about the issue at hand, and means the objective criterion in ethics, his formulation is false. In making the satisfaction of human needs the criterion of morality, he is again forced to deny the objective nature of morality, and falls back into subjective idealism, as was apparent in his definition of the good, which was, as the reader will remember: "anything that satisfies human needs and desires." And after all, that cannot but be otherwise, for there cannot be a distinction between what is good and the objective criterion of what is good.

Because of lack of space, I cannot deepen my critique, nor touch on what I feel to be other important mistakes in Lewis's theory. The rest of the space available to me, I wish to use as an attempt, however inadequate it must be under the circumstances, to give the barest outline of the basic development of ethical consciousness.

Lewis accuses my theory, among other things, of being "non-Marxist" and "inhuman". He comes to this conclusion because I supposedly "reduce all human activity and morals to conformity to law, excluding human needs", and make it the only "basis" for morality. These accusations are

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not backed by a single quotation and Lewis relies solely on his own interpretation of what I say. The fact is that Lewis is able by these means, to completely misinterpret and vulgarise what I actually say, which is probably partly due to his own confusion, referred to above, of the distinction between the category of the general basis of human consciousness, which is the whole of the social being of man, and the objective criterion, upon which man evaluates this social being.

The Objective Criterion in Ethics and the Development of Ethical Consciousness

I define the most basic objective criterion in ethics as: All that is good which conforms to the laws of development of society and mankind. All that is bad which violates these laws. This is better or worse, which conforms or violates these laws to a greater or lesser degree.

Man may ignore this criterion, be unconscious of it or consciously violate it, but this does not destroy the criterion, the laws, or the objective character of the good, but only himself.

In defining this standard upon which man evaluates most basically his social being, his activity, his needs, his institutions etc. I am not in any way giving an explanation, as Lewis implies, of how this activity arises or develops. The criterion itself is not an explanation of how consciousness and morality arises. It is but a part, an aspect, in the process of the development of ethical consciousness itself. But because Lewis confuses these two issues, he is therefore able to assert, that I reduce all activity to "conformity to laws" (a vulgarised version of my criterion) when actually, I am defining that standard upon which man but evaluates his activity. Nor do I assert, as Lewis implies, and as will become quite clear in the course of my argument, that all that is good which "conforms to laws".

Human consciousness arises as a reflection of objective reality in the process of the whole of man's activity, particularly his working activity. (Pavlov, rather than Freud or other bourgeois psychologists, gives us a correct explanation here.) Ethical consciousness is a specific form of this consciousness. The basic form of ethical consciousness is the ethical value judgment. The ethical value judgment (e.g. "Socialism is good") is an evaluation of the various forms of social being on the basis of an objective criterion. An ethical value is, therefore, subjective in the sense that it is a form of consciousness. It is objective, not only in the respect that it reflects objective reality, but in that it is based on an objective criterion. Morality as the rules of conduct, basing themselves on ethical value judgments, represent a further form of development of ethical consciousness.

Morality arises specifically out of the contradictions inherent in the development of every society. Morality is a form of consciousness which attempts to overcome these contradictions. Thus a moral rule is more than a value judgment. It contains a directive, which, in the last analysis, indicates to man how to conform to the laws of his social development. Yet the very moment man is able to conform to his morality, to conform to the laws of his development, new contradictions arise, new laws have already developed. Thus there must always be evil, and therefore morality as those rules of conduct trying to overcome evil. If there was no evil, i.e. contradictions violating the social development of man, there would be no morality, which implies at the same time, that there could be no development. So much for Lewis's assertion that I reduce all activity and morals to conformity to laws. It is precisely, because man can but incompletely conform to the laws of his social development, that morality arises.

Morality is neither absolute nor purely relative. Bourgeois sociologists in agreement with Selsam and Lewis declare: "Morality is always and in all places relative to circumstances. . . ." "This very relativity is their strength and makes them authoritative." (Lewis page 59.) Because they are purely relative to circumstances, the bourgeois sociologists conclude from this logically, that no comparison can be made between socialist and capitalist morality, nor between working class and capitalist morality. The reasoning is obvious. If morality is purely relative to circumstances and not part of an objective process of development. determined by objective laws, and therefore only valid to these circumstances, then by what standard can it possibly be compared? Socialist working class morality is therefore not higher or better than capitalist morality, so they assert. This reactionary relativist theory is false, precisely because morality is not purely relative to circumstances. Morality develops from lower to higher forms, parallel to the development of society itself. With the development of each higher class or society, new and higher conditions, relations, contradictions and laws come into operation, and old ones die. Through the process explained above, new and higher values and morality must therefore arise. Equally with each higher form of basis, man acquires a greater insight into the laws of his development and a greater ability to conform to them. Therefore, each higher class and society produces also a higher morality. Therefore, morality being a process from lower to higher forms, determined

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by objective laws, is not purely relative to circumstances, nor does it derive its validity or authority from these circumstances. Lewis tries to save himself from this relativism by stating: "Working class morals are not purely relative . . . because they break the deadlock of bourgeois morality in the interests of all mankind." But working class morals, just as any other morals, are never purely relative to circumstances, not because they break the deadlock in the interests of mankind, which they admittedly do, but because they are part of a progressive process, determined by objective laws. (Naturally this is difficult to explain, if one makes the basis of morality the satisfaction of one's needs and desires.)

Bourgeois morality, too, broke the deadlock of feudal morality in the interests of all mankind. Its development and its morality, just as any other, is determined by objective laws. Yet the fact that it is determined by objective laws does not mean that, therefore, its morality is good today. The objective criterion states: that is good which conforms to the laws of development of society and mankind, and not: that which conforms to laws. At the time of the overthrow of feudalism, the development of the bourgeoisie conformed with the laws of development of society and mankind as a whole. Its morality was therefore good. Today, its development violates the laws of development of society and mankind. Its growing immorality is the surest sign of its imminent death. Today, the development of the working class conforms to the laws of development of mankind, and its morality is therefore good. Working class morality, by showing man how to conform to the laws of development of society, helps him to solve the antagonistic contradictions of class society forever, which he solves by creating Socialist society. But in doing so he creates new and higher conditions, new laws come into operation, new contradictions arise, and a new and higher morality develops. The process continues on a higher level.

But does the individual in his daily life attempt to evaluate his ethical value judgments on the basis of the basic objective criterion in ethics? Not as a rule. His criterion are the laws of his own personal development which he recognises to the degree of his own personal development, which is in turn ultimately determined by the level of the development of the basis of the society that he lives in. Yet this does not imply relativism in our daily judgments. The development of the individual always proceeds as a member of a social group, and the development of every group is finally based on the development of the class and society. Thus, just as the development of the individual is basically determined by the development of society, so is the criterion of the individual based on the basic objective criterion as formulated above.

That leaves only one conclusion for us today. The harder we attempt and actually succeed in understanding the laws of development of society, the harder we attempt and actually succeed in conforming with these laws, the better human beings must we become in the course of it. That means fighting with all our power, actively and scientifically, as members of the Communist Party for the aims of the working class, for peace and socialism.

Discussion on "Angry Young Men"

Marxism the Way Out

Timothy Enright

ARNOLD KETTLE in his article "Rebels and Causes" has examined that recent and much publicised phenomenon, the Angry Young Men. This cult has supplanted that of the Middle Aged Growlers, a typically British product which has held the stage for some years, and which under the leadership of such stalwart Knights of the Brandished Thistle as Gilbert Harding and J. B. Priestley has launched campaign after campaign, unflinching and unsparing, against the numerous blots and eyesores which disfigure our civilisation. Woe betide the rude taxi-driver, or British Railways whenever they served cold coffee! These were the practical revolutionists, men of robust British character, champions of British norms of decency, standers of no nonsense.

The A.Y.M. are of a different stamp. They have wallowed away into a mystical mistiness, searching with soulful sensitivity for a new Grail. They need to travel light and have eased themselves of such

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lumber as "humanism and scientific progress", "nationalism, communism, socialism, Labourism" and all the other "isms" which have burdened asinine humanity. The M.A.G. have stood like yeomen against the dreary, dull and deadening drabness of the welfare state; the A.Y.M. have turned their shield into a mirror in which to gaze at the ever-deepening profundity of their navels. I am referring to the Colin Wilson variety; others have a positive side to their anger, as Arnold Kettle has shown.

Mysticism is a feature of dying capitalism. As the progressive materialist sector of the world advances, mysticism can only develop spirally, hence more fantastically. Thucydides tells us that events repeat themselves in history and it is certainly true that mushrooming cults are a feature of decaying civilisation. Ancient imperial Rome was a very magnetic pole for mystics and pedlars in the occult. Today as capitalism disintegrates bourgeois thought is fragmented and cults proliferate.

From the lofty tones of the late Professor Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus:* "even if all possible scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched upon at all. . . . There is indeed the inexpressible . . . it is the mystical" to Mr. Colin Wilson's bleatings in *Declaration:* "Without mystical premises philosophy is mere logic" there have been many convolutions. We have also had Dr. Buchman and Billy Graham, Oxford and Maddison Square Garden, cymbal-tinkling and gong-clanging to the New Jerusalem.

Bourgeois writers from T. S. Eliot (*The Waste Land*) to Angus Wilson (*A Bit Off the Map*) have brooded on the doom of capitalist society. They have probed the weaknesses in humanism which has passed its historical zenith, but are unaware of the dialectic of history, of the inevitable rebirth, the transcending of the palimpsest of dead and dying civilisations by communism and history's beginning. The cataclysm which to them rumbles menacing heralds the end of "pre-history" only. They are aware of man's alienation under capitalism but know not the way out, the integration. As Marx put it: "the *sense of having* has taken the place of *all* physical and spiritual senses."

This "sense of having" has received its fullest expression in the American philosophy of pragmatism, the philosophy of imperialism as H. K. Wells calls it. Out with logical analysis and all the rest of the armchair theorising of British philosophers. "The pragmatic method", said William James, "is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective, practical consequences . . . you must bring out of each word its practical cash-value" and the climax, "if the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word it is true." (*Pragmatism.*)

Polybius informs us how useful the ancient Romans found religion as a weapon of class rule. With ruthless cynicism the American ruling class today employ God to advance their scheme of world domination. Mr. Dulles speaks openly of the need for armed evangelism against "materialistic atheism".

Religion describes man's alienation in mystical terms: alienation from God because of the Fall. *The Times Literary Supplement* (7.2.58) in a leading article declared: "The doctrine of Original Sin is unique among Christian doctrines in that it alone can be certainly proved." And so it can if we make the term meaningful as maladjustment and neurosis, the diseases which increasingly reflect the social disintegration and alienation of man in capitalist society. In America where monopoly capitalism is at its most naked, maladjustment is a national disease reaching staggering proportions year by year. Its extent can be gauged from the size of the psychiatric profession, now "a powerful pressure group" (Arnold Kettle's phrase) and this in a country ruled by pressure groups. McCarthy, the cult of James Dean, Little Rock and crimes ranging from murder to rape among schoolchildren, all show the festering of social neurosis in the era of capitalist crisis. Behind the sadistic brutality of screen and comic strip purveyed for the masses are the fears forever haunting the bourgeoisie, aware that individuals and "entire sections" are "by the advance of industry precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence" (*The Communist Manifesto*). Every advance of the working class too at home or abroad increases their panic. Truly a spectre is haunting America—the spectre of communism.

Bourgeois Liberalism

The bourgeois psychologist has revolutionised the conception of inner consciousness. However, he makes the same mistake as the bourgeois generally: he takes account of surface changes in the environment but is fooled by the appearance of solidity at the base. The psychiatrist in isolating the individual and eclectically probing his environment remedies where he can. His work is curative only. Prevention must be sought elsewhere: precisely in the class struggle which will break the stranglehold of monopoly capitalism, remove the environmental causes of social neurosis and liberate man under socialism and later communism for the full development of his potentialities, hitherto only partially tested. Psychology also is in the stage of "pre-history".

Behind the anarchy in bourgeois thought lies a long history of liberalism. Nurtured in the secluded environs of the public school and reared by the

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Mother of Parliaments, its negative side is the Aristotelian doctrine that slavery is the natural state of some (i.e. most) men. The highest peak of its development was in the nineteenth century. T. D. Weldon (*The Vocabulary of Politics*) describes it as: "Freedom from arbitrary interference by executive authorities with the operation of unrestricted competition." It flourished then while children exhausted their puniness in the coalfields and it mouths its banalities today amidst the plantation slavery and colonial looting of the giant combines. Its forte is abstraction, not the necessary generalisation of concepts in accordance with the discoveries of science but the reiteration of eternal verities. It raves about the rights of man in Russia and Hungary but is itself the bland repository of the rights of Kikuyu and Cypriot and Guianese. It stands four square for custom hallowed of dullard and genius playing together on the sacred sod of Eton but is aghast at the comprehensive school. It views the Communist of whatever nationality as an agent of Russia but the colonial official as an emissary of Western civilisation. Its battle hymn is the school speechday special, "It comes from the Misty Ages":

> "Great race, whose empire of splendour
> Has dazzled a wond'ring world!
> May the flag that floats o'er thy wide domains
> Be long to all winds unfurled!"

The present impotence of liberalism is glaringly exposed by the crises in capitalism and the advances in the socialist world. What was concretely positive in its past is now embodied in the *British Road to Socialism*. It still retains an abstractly positive side to it, however—the "liberal conscience" which champions a vague and qualified humanitarianism. On occasion—the Suez campaign and the present campaign against the hydrogen bomb for instance—it generates practical activity. Communists whose strength lies in testing theory by practice welcome every such opportunity of working side by side with progressive people for special objectives. They do so openly and frankly. "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims" (*The Communist Manifesto*). The reactionaries always tremble before the unity of Communists and progressive people and spend lavishly on smear campaigns to prevent it. Unfortunately they have too often succeeded in the past, but they will fail today because the magnitude of the horrors facing mankind makes unity imperative.

Bourgeois thought has become more mystical and atomistic too in natural reaction against the blood-drenching of Flanders in the First World War, the gas-chamber horrors of the Second World War and the shadow thrown by Hiroshima over man's future. Shunning the easy optimism of Victorian England, it grovels in a despair which in the writings of the Eliot school verges on the masochistic, and among the followers of Mr. Colin Wilson has degenerated to the merely maudlin. Art severed from actuality writhes in contortion. Freudian currents and cross-currents have been dragging the artist away from the stream of social consciousness, leaving him to clutch at every psychological wisp for his life-line. He has turned his back on the idealism of the Greeks and the humanism of the Renaissance. The degradation of man brought about by the cash nexus, "the universal procurer of human beings and people" (Marx), has dried up the true source of his inspiration. For the artist unaware of the dialectics of society and the advancing socialist world formalism and abstraction are inevitable. As Plekhanov wrote:

> "But when the artist becomes blind to the most important social trends of his day, the ideas expressed in his works lose much of their value. And, as a result, the works themselves inevitably suffer." (*Art and Social Life*)

Road to Socialism

The Labour movement itself which sprang into being with vigorous unity of aim and method in the days of the Charter has become infected with the miasma of bourgeois liberalism. The Fabian Society, muting the raucous tones of imperial aggrandisement, inculcates gradualism. Morgan Phillips has proclaimed the influence of Methodism on the Labour Party. It is certainly true that the fragmentation in British Protestantism is ideologically reflected in the Labour Party where the individual interpretation of socialism replaces that of the Bible. How can so heterogeneous an amalgam with its sprawling organisation lead Britain to socialism, the stage of greatest social discipline in man's evolution? That is its dilemma. The Left, ranging from pacifists to I.L.P.rs and various kinds of eclectic Marxists, periodically grope towards a pragmatic unity round campaigns generally initiated by the Communist Party. There is only one way out of the bog of liberal Labourism: *The British Road to Socialism*, towards which circumstances will eventually compel the Labour movement despite all the blinding rhetoric of the New Fabians.

Every crisis from which capitalism reels exposes the anaemia of social democratic thinking and adds massive strength to the claims of *The British Road to Socialism* which is also steadily buttressed by every new social and scientific advance in the socialist third of the world. The era of leaps in progress was inaugurated at the Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U. Since 1917 there have been colossal gains; there have also been staggering setbacks, both engineered from outside and arising from deep-rooted errors within. As every giant stride forward sent waves of optimism surging through

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the Communist Parties of the world, so were the reverberations felt from the periodic earthquakes which shook the bastion of socialism in the making. The day when the seismograph ceases to register is not far off; this the capitalist camp knows to its dismay. Socialism is indestructibly and irrevocably established; only a nuclear war can impede the coming of communism.

The British Road to Socialism will inevitably be placed on the public agenda. Bourgeois writers who today ignore it, or dismiss it with smears, will be forced to muster what arguments they can against it. Some of them will be won to its defence:

> "Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole." (*The Communist Manifesto*)

One of the obstacles impeding the winning of recruits to communism in Britain has been the failure to understand that "The forms of the transition to socialism may vary for different countries" (*Declaration of Communist and Workers' Parties*). Bolshevism rose to power within a backward peasant society which dictated the means by which alone that power could be held. The Christian Liberal holds up his hands in holy horror. He forgets that Christianity has been one of the most ruthless of all evangelisms. Adapting Christ's precept, "Compel them to come in", St. Augustine preached the forcible uprooting of heresy. For centuries across national frontiers and within, the cry "Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints" rang out from the camps of Catholic and Jansenist, Lutheran and Calvinist. Bolshevism too arose with messianic fervour, but as it has telescoped history in so many other directions it has done so likewise in this. The new understanding of the national-historical problems of each country, arising within the present era of peaceful and democratic socialist advance, will be reflected in the growing strength of the British Communist Party.

Commitment

For a time in the thirties when fascism and socialism were locked in naked combat in Spain a dialectical awareness spread among British writers and it seemed as if a literature of commitment were to take root here. It proved itself largely abortive. Many of the writers soon shied away, showing the superficiality of their understanding of dialectical materialism. As Arnold Kettle remarks: "If you think of communism as a god it is only a matter of time before you are complaining that it has failed." The Party too is not without blame. These are the days of communist self-examination. Revisionism and dogmatism are declared to be the twin enemies. Nowhere are the dangers of revisionism more manifest than in Britain. The Party, we can be glad, is, and always has been, clear on this.

The recent revisionists have proclaimed the startling discovery that the class-struggle has altered since the days of its classic Marxist simplicity. British history with her unique tradition of compromise and muddle will shuffle us into socialism imperceptibly past the point of qualitative change. Leave it to old Bedsocks! These neophytes of revisionism seem unaware that pronunciamentos to the same effect have been regularly issued by quarters varying from Transport House to Printing House Square for many a long day.

Dogmatism is another matter. One of its most virulent aspects has been the mechanistic fallacies in criticism of the arts and literature which infected all Communist Parties. With his slogans "Let a hundred flowers blossom . . . let a hundred schools of thought contend" Mao Tse-tung has shown the way forward from such sterility.

In Britain the writer has been criticised for his failure to orientate himself towards the proletariat. It is true that a more profound and permanent contribution to literature would be made by the writer who is consciously, or unconsciously, a dialectician, aware like Shelley that:

> "Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
> Nought may endure but mutability."

All literature of lasting substance has dialectical awareness. Shakespeare's characters are not only caught in the dramatic cross-currents of their particular time, place and class, but, transcending these, symbolise also the recurring questions which man must himself resolve and from which no *deus ex machina* can extricate him. As Tennyson put it:

> "Man is the measure of all truth
> Unto himself. All truth is change."

Bourgeois writers are chroniclers from within of a dying class. Their works which are today creative literature will tomorrow be largely examined as social documents. Lacking a dialectical conception, their literary penetration will be blurred when the class society they reflect has disappeared. The Communist sees the present through the lens of the future. He alone, therefore, is capable in the sweep of his perspective of forming a true evaluation of bourgeois art. Proletarian art and literature, despite sporadic flashes, are yet of the future. Russia in pioneering socialism has shown art and overt propaganda to be sterile bedfellows. It is an invaluable lesson.

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Marxism

Marxism in Britain has, if only in a weakened and eclectic form, penetrated the bourgeois strongholds of academic liberalism. Most scholars and writers are ready to grant the revolutionary changes Marx brought about in sociological and historical thinking. Statements such as Bertrand Russell's are common enough:

> "I do not myself accept the thesis (the materialist conception of history) as it stands, but I think that it contains very important elements of truth, and I am aware that it has influenced my own views of philosophical development as set forth in the present work." (*A History of Western Philosophy*)

British Marxism (especially in the work of G. Thomson and B. Farrington) has brought the ancient Greek out of his ethereal Olympus back to the earth of common man and the class struggle. It was a seminal achievement to rescue him from the bourgeois ideologists. Marxism is a merciless tool of analysis which penetrates beneath layer after layer of idealistic distortion. As it enables us to see the dialectical unfolding of the past and the disintegrating processes of the present, so, on the wings of science, it commands us, in Marx's words, to storm heaven.

The sputnik encircling the earth whistles algebraically: "If Soviet socialist man can reach outer space in forty years, how long will it take him to reach targets x, y, z?" A revolutionary development in thought parallels that in science. Primitive man cowered before the elemental forces and sought shelter in priestcraft. Western science is still steeped in *The Mysterious Universe* mysticism of Sir James Jeans. The avowed aim of materialist science is the harnessing of nature, of the very universe itself, to man's needs under the banner of "all things are knowable".

The history of philosophy until Marx has been that of supersession. Every alteration in the economic foundations of society brought accompanying superstructural changes which became reflected in philosophy. The "schools" since Plato successively contradict one another in whole or in part, though all, excluding Feuerbach and the French mechanical materialists, are basically mystical, as Maurice Cornforth has so brilliantly shown in *Science Versus Idealism*, where the spurious claims of Positivism and Pragmatism are exposed. However much the philosophers gyrate they fail to find accommodation with science.

Philosophy in Crisis

Marxism is the natural heir to mechanical materialism and metaphysical idealism. Instinctively reacting against a synthesis which spells the doom of bourgeois ideology, the leading philosophers of today have taken philosophy down a side-alley. Logical positivism, the philosophy which reflects the disintegration of capitalism, was proclaimed by its founders to be capable of solving all philosophical problems. How far the development of "philosophical techniques" has fallen short of these high hopes is shown by the statement of Bertrand Russell, its principal founder:

> ". . . The most serious of my objections is that the new philosophy seems to me to have abandoned, without necessity, that grave and important task which philosophy throughout the ages has pursued . . . to understand the world. Now it seems to concern itself . . . only with the different ways in which silly people can say silly things." (*The Observer*, 16.7.56, quoting the *Hibbert Journal*)

Earl Russell himself has lately fallen back upon a version of Berkeley's idealism:

> ". . . where it [common sense] goes wrong is in supposing that inanimate objects resemble, in their intrinsic qualities, the perceptions which they cause . . . the whole of what we perceive without inference belongs to our private world. . . . The starry heaven that we know in visual sensation is inside us." (*The Listener*, 6.2.58)

Thus the philosophers continue to flounder in the Platonic trap. Marxism in grappling with other systems of thought is destined to a final and complete victory. Unlike these it has no *a priori* scheme of metaphysics. On the contrary it gathers strength, deepening its content, with every fresh discovery in the physical and social sciences. It recognises that philosophy is:

> ". . . that which can only be accomplished by the entire human race in its progressive development"

and it

> "pursues attainable, relative truths along the path of the positive sciences, and the summation of their results by means of dialectical thinking." (*Ludwig Feuerbach*)

The philosopher, the theologian, the writer and the psychologist propound theory after theory to close the cracks in bourgeois ideology which reflect the growing crisis in the capitalist system itself. Science in the West gains startling advances which make the crisis more acute instead of solving it. Its achievements are lopsided owing to the machinations of the warmongers and the need for profit which gears its development to this purpose only. The homogeneous advance in thought and practice in the socialist East is daily exposing the bankruptcy of the West. The way out of the social neurosis "in this spiritually dichotomic age", as a recent letter-writer in the *Manchester Guardian* called it, is clear. It is Marxism which a century ago was trumpeted to the world by *The Communist Manifesto,* is today the guiding philosophy in one third of the world, and has elsewhere gripped the imagination of the masses engaged in class struggle and colonial revolt.

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